

**THE TRANSCULTURALISATION OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN GOSPEL MUSIC:**

**The Context and Culture of Gospel Traditions
in Australian Gospel Music.**

by

ANDREW FRANCIS JOHN LEGG

B.Mus., The University of Tasmania, 1984

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DECLARATION

This exegesis contains the results of research carried out at the University of Tasmania Conservatorium of Music between 2003 and 2006. It contains no material that, to my knowledge, has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information that is duly acknowledged in the exegesis. I declare that this exegesis is my own work and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where clear acknowledgement or reference has been made in the text.

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Andrew Francis John Legg

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I would like to thank the various members of the Southern Gospel Choir and Very Righteous Band for their devotion to and passion for gospel music.

I would also like to thank all my extended family, especially my Mum and Dad for all their support and love.

My very special thanks go to Dianne and our beautiful children – Joshua and Anja, Michelle, Jeremy, Patrick, Alexandra.

To God, always and in all things, be the glory.

ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the effects of the transculturalisation of African American gospel music into an Australian context and has been conducted through a series of performances highlighting elements of this style and my skills in solo piano performance and interpretation and the vocal and instrumental direction of the University of Tasmania Southern Gospel Choir. These performances are contextualized by the accompanying exegesis which examines the culture and context of the development of African American gospel music and develops a comprehensive taxonomy of musical expression and inflection for gospel music, supported by a nomenclature system and recorded examples of the defining vocal performance practices of the African American gospel tradition. These analytical tools are then applied to the comparative analysis of two iconic gospel songs as rendered in performances by two African American gospel choirs and the Southern Gospel Choir. This in-depth analysis underpins an examination of the contexts and culture of African American gospel music within Australia and specifically in a Tasmanian setting, and has informed the developments of my musical direction of the choir and as a solo performer within this style. The success of this direction has been reflected in a 2005 ARIA nomination for the Southern Gospel Choir recording, *Great Day*.

To
Dianne Legg
and
Anthony Campbell

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FOREWORD

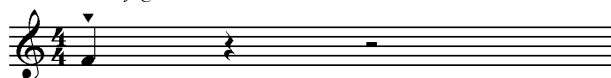
African American gospel music is uniquely and iconically African American, and yet it has found a significant resonance in an Australian culture with which its defining touchstones appear to have little obvious connection. In Tasmania in particular, the connection to African American gospel music has been most profound, established in greater part by the powerful and dynamic performances of the Southern Gospel Choir that I founded and have led for the Conservatorium of Music at the University of Tasmania since January, 2002. My passion for gospel music has led me to the United States on many occasions since first meeting my mentor and great friend Dr. Anthony Campbell in 1997. Tony opened the doors of the African American community to me; not only arranging my debut performances at the *Gospel Music Workshop of America*, but also inducting me as his “Minister in Music,” legitimising my honoured position within the broader African American church, and graciously accepting me into his own family and life. I owe a great deal to Anthony Campbell and the faithful people of the Russell Street Missionary Baptist church in Detroit, the Greater St. Mark’s Baptist church in Tuskegee, Alabama and the African American gospel music community. In sharing music, life and faith, they together have become a significant catalyst both for the transculturalisation of gospel music into the Australian context, and for the original impetus and concept for this doctoral performance and exegesis project.

GLOSSARY

Gospel Nomenclature (1)

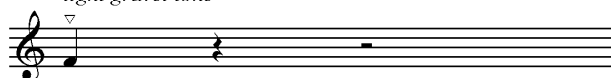
TIMBRE

heavy gravel tone



Heavy vocal distortion. Used to create an impassioned emphasis to a word or phrase, also referred to as "rasp," "grit" or "hoarseness."

light gravel tone



Indicates a lighter, less intense vocal distortion.

gravel tone duration



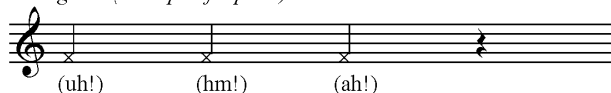
The square "duration" bracket above the staff specifies the duration of the gravel tone.

increasing light to heavy gravel tone



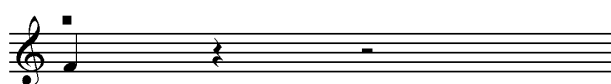
Indicates a light gravel tone increasing to a heavier gravel tone in the time specified by the duration bracket.

grunt (non specific pitch)



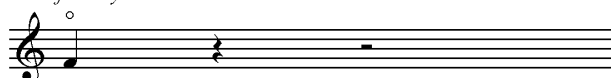
A loud, short expulsion of air on a non-specified pitch. Punctuates sentences and phrases.

scream/shout



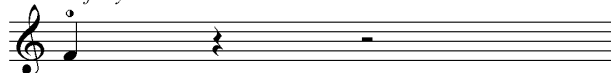
A loud, usually high pitched interjected semi-pitched tone of acclamation or declaration. Also used with the slide, gravel and/or wail.

full cry



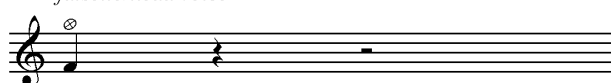
An emphasised audible "break" in the voice that occurs between shifts in the vocal register - i.e. between head and chest voice.

half cry



A softer audible "break" in the voice that occurs between shifts in vocal register.

falsetto/head voice



Indicates the use of the falsetto (male voice) or head voice (female voice).

GLOSSARY

Gospel Nomenclature (2)

PITCH



The upwards slide begins under the destination pitch and slides up to it. Pitch range of slide can vary from a semi-tone, to greater than an octave.



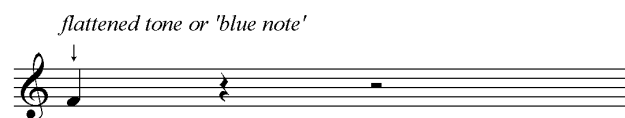
The downwards slide begins above the destination pitch and slides down to it.



The glide is a series of descending and/or ascending slides between over more than two consecutive pitches.



A relatively high-pitched sustained tone/tones placed above an existing melody line.



The "flattened" tone sounds lower than written pitch by an interval of usually less than one tone.



The sharpened tone sounds higher than written pitch by an interval of usually less than one tone.



The upwards bend begins on the written tone, sliding upwards off the note.



The downwards bend begins on the written tone, sliding down off the note.




Slides from the upper tone down to the specified pitch over a shorter time duration.

GLOSSARY

Gospel Nomenclature (3)

rapid, short upward bend



Slides from the lower tone up to the specified pitch over a shorter time duration.

rapid lower neighbour



A rapid descending gospel appoggiatura.

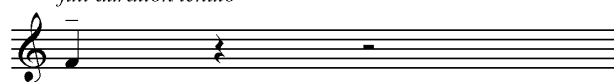
rapid upper neighbour



A rapid ascending gospel appoggiatura.

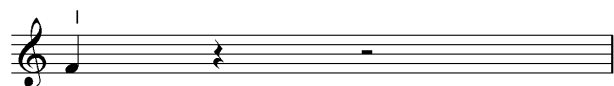
RHYTHM

full duration/tenuto



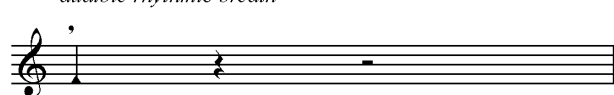
Indicates "full length" of written note.

shorter duration than written



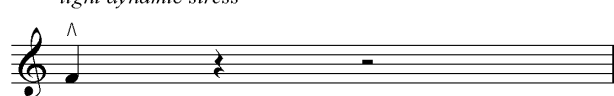
Indicates note duration is less than written.

audible rhythmic breath



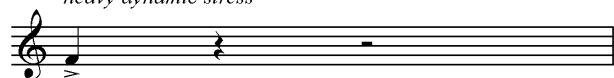
A sharp expulsion or intake of air that is part of the essential rhythmic feel of the phrase.

light dynamic stress



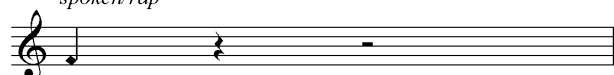
Indicates a light dynamic and/or rhythmic stress or emphasis.

heavy dynamic stress



Indicates an emphatic dynamic and/or rhythmic stress or emphasis.

spoken/rap




Indicates spoken phrases, rap lines and other non-specific pitch lyrics within the melodic line.

GLOSSARY


Gospel Nomenclature (4)

truncated vowel - elongated consonant



man ma - n_____

vowel change



Oh I'm Oh - w - I - 'm

Indicates a shortened or "clipped" vowel that precedes an elongated or sustained consonant.

The vowel sound changes over a longer, sustained tone, similar to a complex diphthong..

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LIST OF AUDIO EXAMPLES

CD Track Lists.

1. CD-A Track List.

1.	Surely God Is Able	The Ward Singers
2.	It's A Highway To Heaven	Alex Bradford
3.	How I Got Over	Aretha Franklin
4.	How I Got Over	Southern Gospel Choir
5.	Great Day	Richard Smallwood
6.	Great Day	Southern Gospel Choir
7.	Feast Of The Lord	Richard Smallwood
8.	At The Table	Richard Smallwood
9.	Daily Bread/Lord Of The Harvest	Fred Hammond
10.	Daily Bread/Lord Of The Harvest	SGC

2. CD-E Track List.

Gospel Moan

1.	Ain't No More Cain	Alan Lomax	0:37 – 0:49 ¹
2.	The Upper Room 1	Mahalia Jackson	2:10 – 2:22
3.	The Upper Room 2	Mahalia Jackson	3:56 – 4:11
4.	Amazing Grace	Aretha Franklin	1:10 – 1:37
5.	Trouble So Hard	Alan Lomax	0:35 – 0:54
6.	A Fool In Love	Tina Turner	0:20 – 0:29
7.	I'm Blessed	Paul Porter	0:50 – 1:10
8.	My Heart Is For You	Fred Hammond	0:00 – 0:18

Timbre: Gravel and Grunts

9.	Church I'm Fully Saved Today	Blind Willie Johnson	0:00 – 0:29
10.	Let Your Light Shine On Me	Blind Willie Johnson	1:22 – 1:44
11.	The Royal Telephone	Sister Mary Nelson	0:18 – 0:36
12.	Moan You Mourners	Bessie Smith	0:39 – 1:21
13.	Lord Do It	LFT Church Choir	2:00 – 2:54
14.	God Is A Good God medley	Fred Hammond	1:16 – 1:47
15.	Jumpin' Judy 1	Lomax	0:00 – 0:16
16.	Jumpin' Judy 2	Lomax	0:25 – 0:45
17.	Trouble 1	Dorothy Love Coates	0:00 – 0:07
18.	Trouble 2	Dorothy Love Coates	1:20 – 1:31
19.	Jesus Is The Reason For The Season	Kirk Franklin	0:00 – 0:25

Timbre: Screams and Shouts

20.	Something's Got A hold On Me	Blind Boys of Alabama	0:24 – 0:30
21.	When I Come To The End Of My Journey	Blind Boys of Alabama	0:15 – 0:25
22.	Peace Be Still	James Cleveland	5:27 – 5:43
23.	It's Raining	Kirk Franklin	0:08 – 0:24
24.	Lord Your Grace	Fred Hammond	2:00 – 2:04
25.	Let It Rain	Bishop Paul Morton	3:28 – 3:33
26.	When I Come To The End Of My Journey	Blind Boys of Alabama	0:50 – 1:16

¹ All time code indicators refer to the location of the excerpt on the original recording.

LIST OF AUDIO EXAMPLES (cont.)

CD-E Track List (cont.)

Timbre: Song-Speech and Vibrato

27.	Jesus Knows How Much We Can Bear	the Georgia Peach	1:30 – 2:13
28.	Let Us Go Back To Church	James Moore	2:10 – 3:00
29.	Little David	Harmony Kings	0:19 – 0:31
30.	Lead Me To The Rock	Lomax	0:00 – 0:32
31.	The New Buryin' Ground	Lomax	0:00 – 0:09
32.	Didn't It Rain	Cora Martin	0:37 – 0:59
33.	God Spoke To Me	Mahalia Jackson	2:06 – 2:25
34.	John The Revelator	Sam Moore	1:52 – 2:09
35.	After A While	Yolanda Adams	0:00 – 0:40

Timbre: Timbre and Register Shifts

36.	There's A Man	Marion Williams	1:03 – 1:23
37.	There's A Man	Marion Williams	1:03 – 2:20

Pitch: Slides, Glides, Wails and the Hi-Who

38.	Stop	Cissy Houston	0:30 – 0:44
39.	Joy	Georgia Mass Choir	1:11 – 1:22
40.	Wholy holy	Aretha Franklin	1:30 – 1:36
41.	Hands Of God	Mahalia Jackson	2:39 – 3:09
42.	I'm Gonna Build On That Shore	Sam Cooke	0:31 – 0:36
43.	Until Jesus Calls Me Home	Sam Cooke	1:05 – 1:20
44.	If You See My Saviour	Alex Bradford	0:38 – 0:40
45.	Peace Be Still	James Cleveland	0:28 – 0:33
46.	Work That Thang Out	Lanelle Collins	2:19 – 2:54
47.	Nobody Knows, Nobody Cares	Marion Williams	2:00 – 2:16
48.	Gotta Have Faith	Lillian Lilly	1:24 – 1:32
49.	Great Day	James Cleveland	0:21 – 0:43
50.	The Blood Of Jesus	James Cleveland	1:21 – 1:36

Pitch: Blues Inflection

51.	The Upper Room 1 & 2	Mahalia Jackson	4:10 – 4:59
52.	Shall These Cheeks Go Dry	Marion Williams	0:00 – 0:13
53.	Just A Sinner	James Cleveland	1:00 – 1:14

Pitch: Passing Tones, Bends, Neighbour Tones and the Gospel Grupetto

54.	Jesus Knows How Much We Can Bear	the Georgia Peach	0:50 – 0:56
55.	There Is A Balm In Gilead	Mahalia Jackson	0:16 – 0:24
56.	I Can Go To God In Prayer	Albertina Walker	0:09 – 0:12
57.	His Eye Is On The Sparrow	Mahalia Jackson	1:35 – 1:43
58.	His Eye Is On The Sparrow	Tanya Blount/Laurn Hill	2:11 – 2:20

Rhythm: Gospel Phrasing and Syncopation

59.	Good To Be Kept By Jesus	James Cleveland	1:30 – 1:41
60.	Are You Sure?	The Staples Singers	0:24 – 0:30
61.	Didn't It Rain	Mahalia Jackson (E)	0:53 – 1:34

LIST OF AUDIO EXAMPLES (cont.)

(CD-E Track List cont.)

Rhythm: *Repetition, Emphasis and Rhythmic Singing*

62.	Surely God Is Able	Clara Ward	0:00 – 0:13
63.	You'll Never Walk Alone	Aretha Franklin	1:20 – 1:56
64.	You'll Never Walk Alone	Aretha Franklin	3:39 – end
65.	My My My God Is Good	Fred Hammond	4:35 – 5:37
66.	My Time Done Come	Golden Gate Quartet	0:00 – 0:07
67.	In The Upper Room	Mahalia Jackson	4:10 – 4:17
68.	Little David	Harmony Kings	0:00 – 0:19
69.	Children Go Where I Send Thee	Fairfield Four	0:05 – 0:24

Lyrics: *Elongation, Truncation and The Immediate Reprise*

70.	Amazing Grace	Mahalia Jackson	0:47 – 0:55
71.	There's A Man	Marion Williams	0:19 – 0:30
72.	Hush	Golden Gate Quartet	0:15 – 0:27

Lyrics: *Interjections and Textual Interpolation*

73.	God Is A Good God	Bishop Paul Williams	0:10 – 0:25
74.	He's Right On Time	Mahalia Jackson	2:08 – 2:15
75.	Elijah Rock (US)	Mahalia Jackson	2:50 – 3:05
76.	Jesus Is The Best Thing	James Cleveland	3:05 – 3:43
77.	Surely God Is Able	Clara Ward	1:08 – 1:30
78.	In Time He'll Bring You Out	GMWA Choir	4:15 – end

Structures in Gospel Music, Improvisation and Gospel Piano: *The Immediate Reprise and the Praise Break*

79.	Total Praise	Richard Smallwood	1:47 – 4:45
80.	It's Rainin'	Kirk Franklin	2:49 – 3:30
81.	Victory Is Mine	Dorothy Norwood	3:41 – end
82.	Don't Take/ When I Think About Jesus	Kirk Franklin	5:36 – end
83.	Lord Do It & Praise Break	LFT Choir	7:05 – end

Structures in Gospel Music, Improvisation and Gospel Piano: *Improvisation*

84.	Down By The Riverside	Mahalia (Church)	0:22 – 0:48
85.	Down By The Riverside	Mahalia (Europe)	0:22 – 0:37
86.	You Are The Living Word	Fred Hammond	4:07 – 4:33
87.	He Loves Me	Kirk Franklin	1:38 – 3:22

LIST OF AUDIO EXAMPLES (cont.)

(CD-E Track List cont.)

Structures in Gospel Music, Improvisation and Gospel Piano: *Gospel Piano*

88.	He's Coming Soon	Arizona Dranes	0:00 – 0:07
89.	I Shall Wear A Crown	Arizona Dranes	0:22 – 0:29
90.	He Has Done Great Things For Me	Roberta Martin	0:00 – 1:54
91.	Be Still My Soul	Roberta Martin	1:35 – 1:45
92.	The Last Mile	Clara Ward	0:50 – 0:57
93.	Jesus Is The Best Thing	James Cleveland	0:20 – 1:37
94.	He's Right On Time	Mildred Falls	2:15 – 2:37
95.	Bless The Lord	Richard Smallwood	0:10 – 0:21
96.	He Loves Me	Kirk Franklin	3:16 – 4:10
97.	Keep On Praisin'	Fred Hammond	0:00 – 0:16

3. CD-E2 Track List.

“How I Got Over”

1.	Cleveland piano introduction	0:00 – 0:11
2.	Legg piano introduction	0:00 – 0:13
3.	Franklin opening vocal line	0:11 – 0:23
4.	Johnson opening vocal line	0:12 – 0:24
5.	SCCC, “O Yes”	0:37 – 0:48
6.	SCCC, “Over” (chorus)	1:12 – 1:36
7.	SGC “O Yes”	0:37 – 0:49
8.	SGC “Over”	1:13 – 1:36
9.	Aretha and SCCC vamp	2:55 – 3:35
10.	Johnson and SGC vamp	2:37 – 3:02

“Great Day”

11.	Smallwood piano introduction	0:00 – 0:11
12.	Legg piano introduction	0:00 – 0:10
13.	Smallwood opening bars 9 – 12 (annotated score)	0:10 – 0:16
14.	Smallwood bridge section (annotated score)	1:40 – 1:47
15.	Smallwood annotated ‘shout’ or vamp (a)	2:45 – 2:58
16.	Hatchett’s solo voice: opening bars of verse 2	1:12 – 1:39
17.	Hatchett’s vocal climax	1:20 – 1:34
18.	Lurighi’s solo voice: opening bars of verse 2	1:05 – 1:29
19.	Smallwood vamp (b)	2:44 – 4:21
20.	Smallwood ending 1 and instant reprise	4:00 – end
21.	SGC vamp; Lurighi improvised solo	2:27 – end
22.	SGC annotated score, opening bars 9 – 12	0:10 – 0:15
23.	SGC annotated score; bridge section.	1:28 – 1:49
24.	SGC annotated score; vamp section	2:28 – 2:50
25.	Smallwood “Feast Of The Lord”	0:32 – 1:30
26.	Smallwood “At The Table” opening feel and drum machine	0:12 – 0:36
27.	Smallwood “At The Table” verse: funk feel and slap bass	1:28 – 1:42
28.	Smallwood “At The Table” solo vamp	3:40 – end
29.	Smallwood “At The Table” vamp 1: harmonic substitutions/extensions	2:44 – 3:20
30.	Hammond medley	0:00 – 3:10

The Transculturalisation of African American Gospel Music:

The Context and Culture of Gospel Traditions in Australian Gospel Music.

Introduction

As one of the most articulate expressions of history, culture and community, African American gospel music seems without obvious parallel as a musical and social phenomenon of the twentieth century. It is a musical genre born of slavery to an oppressed ethnic minority, which has underpinned and inspired the most significant developments in contemporary popular music for over one hundred years, and furthermore is one that has played a significant role in the shaping of western popular music and culture throughout the twentieth century.

In travelling and performing with Dr Anthony Campbell, a past professor of homiletics, preacher-in-residence at Boston University and respected ecumenical and liberal theologian, I observed that he would often commence his sermons with the statement “the African American church community sings its theology,” highlighting the connection between systemic ideology and community and communal expressions of those ideologies through music. Distinguished Professor of History at American University, Bernice Johnson Reagan, also writes:

Any study of African American sacred song and singing is a study of its host community in general and its worship community in particular. The African American worship community – the Black church in its largest

expression – has been the nurturing institution for one of the world’s greatest music cultures.²

The articles of culture and faith that give meaning to this community, the touchstones and definition of their identity as a people, have been distilled, expressed, reinforced and perpetuated through their sacred music for well over a century. Justice, equality, the cry for freedom and the “great eternal hope” beyond life itself are the fundamental threads that run throughout the fabric of traditional African American culture. This culture is defined by race, collective experience, language and geographic location and the often-violent collision between African tribal and European Protestant social and religious traditions and practice. This holistic context has little immediate or obvious connection with the social or religious traditions of Australians. Yet within gospel music, a dynamic and alarmingly honest expression of community, some Australians are indeed finding connection and meaning.

A clear expression of this fact is demonstrated through the existence of the *Gospel Australian Music Association* (GOSAMA). Originally formed to “encourage, develop and provide a network for those who share a passion for Gospel music and its related styles,”³ GOSAMA listed some 800 individuals and choirs on the east coast of Australia devoted to the performance of a variety of gospel music genres during 2005. Additionally, as a result of this significant interest in African American gospel music, an Australian national choral symposium, the *Festival of Voices*⁴ chose to include an

² Bernice Johnson Reagon, *We’ll Understand It Better By And By*, ed. Bernice Johnson Reagon (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 3.

³ Andy McClusky, *Roots Music Australia*, 2001 [website on-line]; available from <http://www.rootsmusic.com.au/>; Internet; accessed 2 March, 2007.

⁴ *The Festival of Voices* is a national vocal and theatre symposium held annually in Hobart, Tasmania. It is sponsored by the State Government through Events Tasmania, the Tasmanian Government’s event unit, part of the Department of Tourism, Arts and the Environment, which has a leadership role to

African American gospel music stream in their inaugural program in Hobart in July 2005. The Festival subsequently selected the gospel “stream” as their major promotional drawcard, in recognition of the perceived attractant value of African American gospel music within the Australian choral and arts landscape. The State Government statistics (Figure 1) illustrate the strength of enrolments in the “gospel stream” against the total enrolment figures for each year, representing the combined enrolments of the three other major streams of opera/oratorio, world music and youth choir.

Table 1: Festival of Voices: Enrolment Statistics⁵

Year	Participants in Gospel workshop	Participants in weekend gospel workshops	Total Gospel	Total Enrolment
2005	58	50	108	280
2006	45	52	97	190
2007	73	N.A.	135 ⁶	208

stimulate event growth in Tasmania. Events Tasmania works with key events that have the capacity to deliver a range of social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits to Tasmania.

⁵ The following chart lists the Festival’s breakdown of participants for 2007 and was supplied upon request from the author by the *Festival of Voices* organization. The Gospel stream significantly continues to attract the largest representation of participants within the adult-aged workshops on offer.

WIWP (Winter Intensive Workshop Program)	No. of days of WIWP	Number of Participants in workshops	Number of <u>interstate</u> participants	Number of <u>intrastate</u> participants	Number of local participants
Classical	4 Days	15	11		4
Gospel	3 Days	73	58	2	13
Theatre	4 Days	10	1	8	1
World Music	4 Days	32	22		10
Total		314	183	61	70

⁶ The “Total Gospel” figure in Table 1 represents all participants in the final gospel concert, including 17 additional participants from the other festival streams, and the Southern Gospel Choir “45” ensemble.

Although these significant statistics provide an early indication of the resonance of gospel music within a defined sector of the Australian population, Australians' understanding and perception of "gospel" music is as complex as it is broad, and the nature of this broader understanding will be explored later in this study.

If then we accept the communication of meaning as being one of the defining characteristics of music as an art form, how then can meaning be communicated for Australians when the contextual touchstones of gospel music (American history, culture, politics, economics, social norms etc.) are not part of contemporary Australian culture? If it can be argued that African American gospel music does resonate with a wide section of the Australian national and more particularly the local Tasmanian community, how and why does this occur when the broader geographic and cultural trends that gave rise to it do not exist within Australian geographically-specific cultural traditions?

Again, in my conversations with Dr Campbell, also a great traveller and communicator of culture, music and theology, he claimed to have spent much of his later research life trying to answer the question: "Will my theology travel?"⁷ His question is particularly relevant to this study: by posing this question as central to his continuing research, Dr. Campbell was attempting to validate that the substance of one culture can find meaning in another. He advocated that the human universality of his own life experiences – formed within the community of a displaced and persecuted people – could indeed find resonance in a foreign land. Simply expressed, he believed that his theology, his stories, his sermons and his "performance practice"

⁷ Dr. Campbell first posed the question "will my theology travel?" as part of his opening presentation and sermon at the Hutchins School in Sandy Bay, Tasmania in August, 1996. Dr. Campbell had been invited to Hutchins as "visitor" by the then Headmaster, John Bednall.

– his culturally-specific and physical manner of address – would find resonance, understanding and relevance outside of his own culture. In pursuit of this, Dr Campbell travelled to Australia and England between 1995 and 2000, becoming the first African American to preach at Westminster Cathedral, and the first African American Missionary Baptist to preach at the Cathedral church of St David in Hobart, St Paul’s Cathedral in Melbourne and St Paul’s Cathedral in Perth, Western Australia. Additionally, he was invited to be the official “school visitor” for The Hutchins School in Hobart where I became his accompanist and “minister in music.” Subsequently, Dr. Campbell and I travelled, lectured and “performed” together throughout Tasmania and America during the following ten year period, which included my debut performance as “featured artist” at the Thirtieth Anniversary Gospel Music Workshop of America in Cincinnati in 1997. Dr. Campbell’s influence on my developing musical expression and cultural awareness of and sensitisation to African American gospel music, community and culture is particularly significant. He opened and established a unique trans-cultural access for me into African American music and culture, one that directly informs this research and my continuing performance practice.

The central focus of this research will be a comparative study of two gospel tunes; James Cleveland and Aretha Franklin’s version of the W. Herbert Brewster song, “How I Got Over,” from the album *Amazing Grace* (Atlantic Records), released in 1972, and Richard Smallwood’s “Great Day” from the album *Adoration: Live in Atlanta with Vision* (Verity Records, 1996). These performances will then be compared with recordings of the same two tunes by Australian ensemble, the Southern Gospel Choir from their debut album *Great Day* (Spark in the Dark/MARA!

Music Records), released in 2005. This comparative analysis and the graphic analytical nomenclature system that has been developed in conjunction with it, will ultimately illuminate the key aspects of the transculturalisation of African American gospel music within the context of a concert performance by the Southern Gospel Choir, the Very Righteous Gospel Band and myself as gospel pianist, singer, arranger, and conductor. The primary research for this exegesis was prompted by my work with the Southern Gospel Choir and band, and the results of the research are evidenced in the performances and recordings of this ensemble, and in my own performances and recordings as a contemporary pianist. To support this, appendixes 8.1 and 8.2, along with the accompanying CD-B and DVD-B, present a chronological selection of musical performances which document my development as a contemporary pianist, as the pianist/conductor/arranger for the Southern Gospel Choir, and the development in musical expression for the Choir itself.

Literature Review

There has been a marked increase in scholarly research devoted to African American gospel music over the previous two and a half decades. Prior to this, the majority of the credible research was contained for the most part within other larger and more comprehensive texts and studies. In 1980, Burnim noted, for example, that; “There is no single source to which one can refer to learn of the early history of gospel music....”⁸ Further, Jackson-Brown suggested that the paucity of research in this field was, in her view, due to the resistance from academe and other educational

⁸ Mellonee Burnim, “Gospel Music Research,” *Black Music Research Journal* 1 (1980): 63.

institutions in the United States to the acceptance of African American gospel music as “legitimate,” and that more recent developments that had occurred had done so, “in spite of the narrowness of academic departments, academicians, and disciplines whose focus and interest lie outside the Western European tradition.”⁹ Finally, Ramsey reinforced this notion within the broader context of African America.

Music possesses the power “to mean.” ...It is rare for scholars to actually write that popular music or African American music does not mean anything. Yet judging from the historical trajectory of musical studies in the United States, one might conclude that, until recently, few have believed that African American music has meant something worth considering seriously.¹⁰

It is not surprising then to discover that two of the first and most significant texts devoted to African American music and culture, and which also refer to gospel music, were written not by musicologists, but by a historian and a professor of English. In *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*,¹¹ Levine provided a literary and ethnomusicological study of the slave songs of African America, preceding his discussion of the psycho-social and spiritual contexts within African American slave culture, and the emergence of secular song and its relationship to the cultural values of the African American community. He argued that gospel music had become the most significant expression of African American community attitudes and sensibilities.

⁹ Irene Jackson-Brown, “Developments in Black Gospel Performance and Scholarship,” *Black Music Research Journal* 10 (Spring, 1990): 38.

¹⁰ Guthrie P. Ramsey Jr., *Race Music: Black Culture from Bebop to Hip-Hop* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2003), 17-18.

¹¹ Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

Changes in religious consciousness and world view are more clearly delineated in the gospel songs, which from the 1930s on displaced the spirituals as the most important single body of black religious music.¹²

Heilbut wrote exclusively on African American gospel music in *The Gospel Sound*,¹³ using interviews, first-hand accounts and narrative to explore the contributions and performance styles of significant performers and composers, and concluded with a brief examination of the importance of radio to the spread of the “gospel sound.” Heilbut’s research does, in places, overtly reflect his own views to the point where he “relentlessly imposes his own interpretation and sense of values on those observances which he witnesses first hand, as well as on those comments he solicits in his interviews.”¹⁴ Burnim expounds her claim of bias citing Heilbut’s description of glossolalia as “gibberish,” in fact presents an overtly negative attitude towards this type of spiritual expression and experience, and that therefore it is difficult to “credit Heilbut with a meaningful contribution to gospel music scholarship when one is confronted with such analytical bias throughout the work.”¹⁵ Burnim’s comments are perhaps a little overstated, as Heilbut’s accounts of the performance practices and musical expressions of the various gospel singers he describes, together with his very useful discography, still constitute a valuable resource for research. Heilbut also examined the music of Herbert Brewster, examining some elements of Brewster’s gospel singing technique.¹⁶ Although Heilbut focused particularly on the analysis of Brewster’s lyrics, he employed some significant – if undefined – key phrases in his description of “the musical qualities of gospel,” including “moans,” and “slurs.”

¹² Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 174

¹³ Anthony Heilbut, *The Gospel Sound: Good News and Bad Times* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1997).

¹⁴ Burnim, “Gospel Music Research,” 64.

¹⁵ Burnim, “Gospel Music Research,” 64.

¹⁶ Anthony Heilbut, “‘If I Fail, Tell the World I Tried’: Reverend W. H. Brewster on Records,” *Black Music Research Journal* 7 (1987): 119-126.

The vital link between African American culture, community and spirituality (in the broader sense), and the development and unique expression of gospel music is key to the foundations of this exegesis. Historical narratives, biographies and first-hand accounts of the lives of the African American slaves have proved to be invaluable in developing and building a critical knowledge of African American history and culture. In *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*,¹⁷ Jacobs articulately and straightforwardly describes her life as a slave in a book originally published in 1861, and offers some poignant, alarmingly honest and often uncomfortable insights into the effects of slavery and violence on both black and white society. Additionally, Douglass, in an autobiography from 1845, provides a unique description of his life as a slave, arguing against slavery and its abhorrent practices during a period when it was particularly dangerous to do so.¹⁸

Sincerely and earnestly hoping that this little book may do something toward throwing light on the American slave system, and hastening the glad day of deliverance to the millions of my brethren in bonds – faithfully relying upon the power of truth, love, and justice, for success in my humble efforts – and solemnly pledging myself anew to the sacred cause, I subscribe myself,
Frederick Douglass. Lynn, Mass., April 28, 1845.¹⁹

Douglass's powerful abolitionist views contrast markedly with those expressed by Booker T. Washington in 1901 in his account of his life, in which he provides many examples of the significant obstacles that he faced as a slave and then as an

¹⁷ Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, ed. Nellie Y. McKay and Frances Smith Foster (Boston: Published for the author, 1861; reprint, New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001).

¹⁸ Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, ed. Houston A. Baker Jr. (Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845; reprint, New York: Penguin Books, 1982).

¹⁹ Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, 159.

emancipated black man in acquiring a formal education and the social and financial advancement that he maintained could only be achieved through such an education.²⁰ However, his comment, “In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress,”²¹ initially taken from the so-called “Atlanta Compromise” address, attracted widespread criticism from many within the African American community. Although Washington’s actual position was perhaps not as extreme as his comment might otherwise suggest, his account of his life experiences – although often placing himself and his achievements in the most “favourable light” – still provides an illuminating insight into the culture and community of African America.

The Souls of Black Folk by W.E.B. DuBois, originally published in 1903, is possibly the most influential text from this early period of African American history.²² Editor Candice Ward wrote of DuBois’ work; “Part social documentary, part history, part autobiography, part anthropological field study, *The Souls Of Black Folk* remains unparalleled in its scope ... presenting a portrait of black culture that commands respect.”²³ DuBois powerfully argued that “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line [*sic*]....”²⁴ He strongly opposed many of Washington’s views, believing that they represented an “accommodation of white supremacy,” and claiming they would only perpetuate white supremacy and oppression. Ultimately, DuBois’ views and position polarised the leadership within the African American community.

²⁰ Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (New York: Doubleday and Page, 1901; reprint, New York: Penguin Books, 1986).

²¹ Washington, *Up From Slavery*, xii.

²² W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls Of Black Folk* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1903; reprint, New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1994).

²³ DuBois, *The Souls Of Black Folk*, iii.

²⁴ DuBois, *The Souls Of Black Folk*, 9.

On the development of mass and popular culture within broader America, Susman articulately pursued what he terms his “repeated, almost obsessive” major themes of “the revolutions in communication and organization, the significant role of a new middle class, the battle between the party of culture and that of civilization.”²⁵ Significantly, Susman’s examination of 1930s America – in particular, his description of the proliferation of self-help books devoted to the accumulation of personal wealth – provides a valuable context for the rapid development of African American gospel organizations and publishing houses that occurred during this period, as well as the eventual “cross-over” of African American music into the broader American contemporary popular music industry.

A seminal anthropological study conducted by Cayton and Drake²⁶ produced an invaluable demographic, historical and sociological commentary on and analysis of African American migration and living conditions in the “ghetto” of Chicago’s South Side during the 1930s and 1940s – a period central to the early development of African American gospel music. This landmark study was published under the title *Black Metropolis* in 1945, and part three in particular provided some illuminating comments in relation to the position and role of the African American church, denominational demographics, and the connection between socio-economic status and preferred religious expression and ritual that continues to inform current research.

²⁵ Warren I. Susman, *Culture As History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2003), xii.

²⁶ Horace Cayton and St. Claire Drake, *Black Metropolis* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1946).

An excellent analysis of slavery and race relations in America's south is provided in *A Rage For Order*,²⁷ and Williamson's arguments for "cultural mutation," or the lessening of African cultural awareness and influence on successive generations of African American slaves, are significant and will inform some of the central contentions of this exegesis.

The process of depriving black people of their natal culture and of force-drafting them into European, English, and English American culture proceeded very far, even in the first generation of those taken. But when the very first black child was conceived, and born, and bred in America, a cultural mutation occurred. That child, and the brothers and sisters who came after, were lost to Africa far more than were their parents.²⁸

Wynter provides a more contemporary examination of ethnicity and race within contemporary America, with particular reference to developments in media, advertising, technology and the global market place and their effect on the divisions between black and white society.²⁹ Wynter's argument for a new, "transracial" identity within American culture is illuminating, and he relates many of the significant changes in American popular culture to America's collective pursuit of "the profit motive."

Southern's *The Music Of Black Americans* describes in considerable depth and breadth the history of and major developments in African American music and

²⁷ Joel Williamson, *A Rage For Order: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

²⁸ Williamson, *A Rage For Order*, 4-5.

²⁹ Leon E. Wynter, *American Skin: Pop Culture, Big Business and the End of White America* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2002).

culture.³⁰ Beginning with an examination of the origins of African American music in Africa, and concluding with the final chapter chapter “Currents In Contemporary Arenas,” Southern’s work is substantial and most comprehensive, and *The Music of Black Americans* has become one of the most significant and commonly prescribed standard texts in American educational institutions for the study of African American music. Although her instructive section on early and contemporary gospel is relatively small, her detailed coverage and descriptions of the precursors of gospel, such as the spiritual, are extremely useful. However, Burnim and Maultsby readily acknowledge and expand Southern’s work in a similarly expansive ethnomusicological study of the history and development of African American music.³¹ Their work also contains several sections devoted to the origins of gospel music, the development of the gospel music industry and the immergence of “contemporary” gospel. Burnim devotes one chapter to “Religious Music,” and succinctly covers the three major genres of spirituals, ring shouts and gospel music. However, whilst readily acknowledging the exclusion of gospel music from the greater part of scholarly research before 1980, the space allocated for the study of gospel music within this larger work is relatively small, and the concluding paragraph on contemporary gospel unfortunately does not provide any substantial historical or analytical depth.

Many of the other significant works that examine African American music in greater depth tend to narrow their focus by necessity. Ward offers some useful insights into the development of African American music in the transitional Rhythm & Blues to

³⁰ Eileen Southern, *The Music Of Black Americans: A History*, 3rd ed. (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1983).

³¹ Mellonee V. Burnim and Portia K. Maultsby, eds., *African American Music: An Introduction* (New York and London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2006).

Rock & Roll period of the 1940s and 1950s.³² Ward relates the contemporary African American music expression and ideology of the 1950s and 1960s to the developments in the modern civil rights movement, and also supports the evolutionary and developmental link between gospel music, the “Soul” music of the 1960s, and the origins of what was to become “contemporary gospel.”

It was the ubiquity of certain musical and presentational devices drawn from a gospel idiom to which blacks had an intensely proprietary relationship, which gave soul music its nationalistic credentials and enabled it to fulfil its major psychological and social functions – functions which had once been largely the province of the black church.³³

Similarly, Werner examines the link between African American music and the racial struggle in America and puts forward an excellent argument for the existence of what he terms a “gospel impulse,” consisting of a three step process of “(1) acknowledging the burden; (2) bearing witness; (3) finding redemption.”³⁴ He further describes the gospel impulse in terms of a body of stable cultural knowledge or understanding that underpins and provides the essential impetus for the unique African American musical expressive devices that characterise and define African American musical expression.

Finally, both Samuel A Floyd Jr. and Guthrie P. Ramsey provide in-depth and, at times, thought-provoking perspectives on the development of African American music. Floyd argues that black folk-culture was, and remains, the most significant

³² Brian Ward, *Just My Soul Responding: Rhythm and Blues, Black Consciousness, and Race Relations* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998).

³³ Ward, *Just My Soul Responding*, 184.

³⁴ Craig Werner, *A Change Is Gonna Come: Music, Race and the Soul of America*, rev. and updated (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 28-30.

impelling force within black music.³⁵ He bases much of his work on the landmark semiotic study, *The Signifying Monkey*,³⁶ which examined the interrelationship between the culture and vernacular expressions of Africans and African Americans in African American literature. Floyd argues that African American music not only contains African musical “characteristics,” but significantly also “the musical *tendencies*, the mythological beliefs and assumptions, and the interpretive strategies of ... the music of the African homeland.”³⁷ Ramsey’s research is informed by Gates and Floyd, yet focuses on his own musical and spiritual life while pursuing the nature of meaning in music, and the means by which African American music has continued to inform and define its community.³⁸ He addresses the importance of improvisation and the centrality of the “folk ethos” – that he claims defines “blackness” – to African American music, arguing that the “ancestral lineage” of this folk ethos is found in the “folk tales, speech patterns, religious beliefs and musical practice” of the African American community.³⁹ Of particular significance to this exegesis, Ramsey states; “Proclivities for these sensibilities are passed along from generation to generation through oral transmission. The black church operates as an enclave of this cultural reproduction.”⁴⁰ Ramsey also refers to the importance of the essential “gospel vocal techniques” that were first identified by Williams-Jones in 1975,⁴¹ and which also significantly underpin much of the research and analysis detailed in chapters two and three of this exegesis.

³⁵ Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., *The Power Of Black Music: Interpreting its History from Africa to the United States* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

³⁶ Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

³⁷ Floyd, *The Power Of Black Music*, 5.

³⁸ Guthrie P. Ramsey Jr., *Race Music: Black Culture from Bebop to Hip-Hop* (Berkley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2003).

³⁹ Ramsey, *Race Music*, 17-18.

⁴⁰ Ramsey, *Race Music*, 203-204.

⁴¹ Pearl Williams-Jones, “Afro-American Gospel Music: A Crystallization of the Black Aesthetic,” *Ethnomusicology* 19 (September, 1975): 373.

Of research that deals exclusively with African American gospel music, Sims-Warren has presented an excellent representative collection of musical scores of significant works from the African American sacred canon including spirituals (plantation and jubilee songs), gospel songs (hymns and traditional songs), Euro-American hymns, and a smaller collection of contemporary gospel songs.⁴² Her invaluable notes on the historical contexts of these songs, in many instances, further illuminates and intensifies the meaning of the song lyrics, and opens an access of greater understanding for researchers who are not born into and raised within the African American culture.

In a relatively concise text, Jackson provides a historical and sociological analysis of gospel music. She examines the contexts within which gospel music emerged, the importance of the “race” issue, the effects of the commercialisation of gospel music, and, crucially, the role of female gospel singers in bringing African American gospel music to the broader commercial arena.⁴³ She draws attention to the role that gospel music continues to play in the formation of African American identity – one of the central tenets of this exegesis – and quotes eminent gospel musician and ethnomusicologist Horace Boyer stating; “The stress Boyer placed on gospel’s unifying qualities, and on black students’ desire for self-expression, makes clear the degree to which the music had become not simply a form a religious expression but a key source of African American identity.”⁴⁴

⁴² Gwendolin Sims Warren, *Ev’ry Time I Feel The Spirit* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1997).

⁴³ Jerma A. Jackson, *Singing In My Soul: Black Gospel Music in a Secular Age* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

⁴⁴ Jerma A. Jackson, *Singing In My Soul*, 134.

Harris has presented a finely detailed and meticulously researched examination of the life and music of Thomas Dorsey, which he illustrates and expands with both musical analysis and accompanying notated examples.⁴⁵ He has also outlined in great detail the major social and musical developments that shaped gospel music during its early and middle periods, as well as providing some valuable insights into the cultural and socio-economic contexts underpinning the broader African American community during the early part of the twentieth century.

To focus on Dorsey as a leader of the gospel blues movement surely illuminates certain elements of the evolution of that song style. But to do so excessively overshadows aspects of his life that lead to a deep understanding of the social milieu out of which gospel blues evolved. This is even truer in Dorsey's case since he personifies – almost uniquely so – the thought and social forces that forged the culture in which the music was shaped.⁴⁶

Dargan and Bullock used the content of several interviews with gospel singers and performers to highlight the emotional effect of gospel performances of gospel singer Willie Mae Ford Smith.⁴⁷ They additionally examined Ford Smith's use of both the pentatonic and diatonic major scales, blue notes and tempo and rhythmic structures, as well as the structure of her melodic and rhythmic singing in some detail.

⁴⁵ Michael W. Harris, *The Rise of Gospel Blues: The Music of Thomas Andrew Dorsey in the Urban Church* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁴⁶ Harris, *The Rise of Gospel Blues*, xix.

⁴⁷ William Thomas Dargan and Kathy White Bullock, "Willie Mae Ford Smith of St. Louis: A Shaping Influence upon Black Gospel Singing Style," *Black Music Research Journal* 9 (Autumn, 1989): 249-270.

The vernacular traditions of African Americans were the focus of a shorter examination of gospel music by Brothers, addressing the changing cultural climate of African America following the Great Migration of the 1920s and 1930s.⁴⁸

African Americans who came from the rural South to Chicago found an established tradition that did its best to welcome them in ... at the same time that it resisted the practices they brought with them.⁴⁹

Brothers also suggested that the development of the harmonic language of gospel was more complex than for blues, relying on the “blending of harmonic styles from European-American music with aspects of an African legacy.”

A surprising development is the taking up of gospel style into rhythm and blues in the early 1950s. Ray Charles (along with other musicians) transfers not only the melismas, the call-and-response, the straining, emotionally charged timbre of gospel but also its harmonic formulas.⁵⁰

However, Brothers descriptive analyses stop short of describing and notating these central aspects of African American performance technique as they, by omission, seem to be accepted as “known” by those who have been born into and brought up within the African American community. It is precisely this lack of universal definition that hinders the research into the performance practices of African American gospel music when performed outside of its originating culture and context and it is this omission that this exegesis seeks to address.

⁴⁸ Thomas Brothers, “Ideology and Aurality in the Vernacular Traditions of African-American Music C.A. 1890 – 1950,” *Black Music Research Journal* 17 (Autumn, 1997): 169-201.

⁴⁹ Brothers, “Vernacular Traditions of African-American Music,” 185.

⁵⁰ Brothers, “Vernacular Traditions of African-American Music,” 188.

In a study focussed on the construction of song lyrics, Allen addressed the use of narrative and vocal improvisation in gospel quartet singing.⁵¹ His concluding section however, also highlights the importance of the centrality of “community” and the significance of the inter-connectedness of audience and performer in African American music. “Singers and listeners come together as the performance accelerates toward a moment of spiritual communion, a state of ‘spontaneous communitas.’”⁵²

An effective statistical approach to identifying the key musical and textual characteristics of a number of spirituals has been demonstrated by Maultsby.⁵³ Her comprehensive analysis of the textual forms and structures in African American spirituals is substantial and defining for the study of the spiritual. Furthermore, she also draws attention to the importance and need for further musical analytical research in the defining of the various performance practices and musical traditions of African American sacred music.

The focus of many published studies of black spirituals centres on their origin, and their social evolution, but a detailed discussion of the musical characteristics and performance practices which characterize these religious songs is often omitted from these and other studies. Reliable data in these areas not only contribute to an objective and thorough understanding of the spiritual tradition but also are essential for valid comparative studies of black and non-black religious musical forms.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Ray Allen, “Shouting the Church: Narrative and Vocal Improvisations in African-American Gospel Quartet Performance,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 104 (Summer, 1991): 295-317.

⁵² Allen, “Shouting the Church,” 314.

⁵³ Portia K. Maultsby, “Black Spirituals: An Analysis of Textual Forms and Structures,” *The Black Perspective in Music* 4 (Spring, 1976): 54-69.

⁵⁴ Maultsby, “Black Spirituals,” 54.

Additionally, Smallwood⁵⁵ briefly examined the centrality of improvisation to both gospel and blues, listing “phrasing, breathing, vocal intensity, timbre and, above all, the indefinable and inimitable quality of conviction” as key to gospel expression.⁵⁶ Although far too brief, Smallwood’s inclusion of notated musical examples of “embellishment” and “reworking” in the gospel style again demonstrates the importance of definitive notated analysis for the accurate description and definition of gospel music technique and expression.

Some of the research demonstrates that African American gospel music has not always found wide or unanimous acceptance as a legitimate sacred music within specific sections of the African American community. Phillips for example presented a position strongly critical of gospel music, which he supported with comments solicited from his interview/survey of several prominent academics and choral directors from Tennessee.⁵⁷ His underlying position was a particularly one-sided, but not uncommonly held view, and although somewhat virulently expressed in places, his research still provides an interesting insight into the intensity of the debate that surrounded gospel music’s acceptance within the canon of African American sacred music. For example, the comments of those he interviewed reveal something of the tremendous importance that many African Americans placed on their indigenous sacred music as an articulate expression of their identity. However, whilst the opinions of his subjects are generally instructive, Phillips concluding comments, particularly in regard to gospel music’s contribution to “cultural genocide,” are overstated, unsupported and ill-considered in the broader context.

⁵⁵ Richard Smallwood, “Gospel and Blues Improvisation,” *Music Educators Journal* 66 (January, 1980): 100-104.

⁵⁶ Smallwood, “Gospel and Blues Improvisation,” 101.

⁵⁷ Romeo Eldridge Phillips, “Some Perceptions of Gospel Music,” *The Black Perspective in Music* 10 (Autumn, 1982): 167-178.

Jackson however signals a significant shift in opinion towards the recognition of gospel music within scholarly research that, in marked contrast to Phillips, linked the antebellum spiritual and gospel music as constituents of the one, unified tradition.⁵⁸

I wish first to establish the conceptual link between the spiritual and gospel music in order to demonstrate that the aesthetic values and practices intrinsic to the gospel music tradition do not represent a break with the traditional past.... Gospel is the modern-day counterpart of the antebellum spiritual.⁵⁹

Jackson also significantly employs the phrases “shouting cry” and “growl” to describe gospel singing techniques relating to the soloists in gospel quartets, but unfortunately she does not attempt to further clarify or define the meaning of these terms or indeed notate examples of them.

Wald’s examination of the music and life of Rosetta Tharpe is particularly useful, describing the culture of African America and the broader American popular culture within the context of gospel music “crossover” – the movement of gospel music (including techniques, performance practice, specific songs and artists) into the commercial, secular market.⁶⁰ She addresses the nature of cultural shift by examining the songs and performance practices used by Tharpe, and provides a useful background into not only the development and effects of the commercialisation of gospel, but its eventual global dissemination and broader appeal.

⁵⁸ Joyce Marie Jackson, “The Changing Nature of Gospel Music: A Southern Case Study, *African American Review* 29, no. 2 (1995): 185-200.

⁵⁹ Jackson, “The Changing Nature of Gospel Music,” 186-188.

⁶⁰ Gayle Wald, “From Spirituals to Swing: Sister Rosetta Tharpe and Gospel Crossover,” *American Quarterly* 55 (September, 2003): 387-416.

This “crossover” mythology,” as I will call it, was the product of contradictory narratives: one that insisted on identifying Tharpe as a folk musician whose art was indissolubly linked to the traditions of African American Pentecostalism and another that celebrated the capacity of gospel song to transcend socially bounded categories of identity.⁶¹

Pearl Williams-Jones’ early and significant work continues to inform contemporary scholarly research. An ethnomusicologist and practising gospel singer and musician, her 1975 article for *Ethnomusicology* traced the foundations of gospel music to its African origins through the “folktales, speech patterns religious beliefs and musical practices” of “black America,” in an article that was profound in concept and design.⁶² Her arguments and views pre-empt much of the scholarly research that was to follow over the next thirty years, and her views add considerable weight to many of the arguments put forward in this exegesis.

Black gospel music is one of the new seminal genres of contemporary black culture which continually maintains its self-identity while it nourishes and enriches the mainstream of the world’s cultural sources.⁶³

Williams-Jones also inextricably linked the definition of a black aesthetic with the practices and implications drawn from the black church and its music, and further provided an illuminating and carefully considered definition for gospel music.

⁶¹ Wald, “From Spirituals to Swing,” 7.

⁶² Pearl Williams-Jones, “Afro-American Gospel Music: A Crystallization of the Black Aesthetic,” *Ethnomusicology* 19 (September, 1975): 373-385.

⁶³ Williams-Jones, “A Crystallization of the Black Aesthetic,” 373.

Black gospel music, a synthesis of West African and Afro-American music, dance, poetry and drama, is a body of urban contemporary black religious music of rural folk origins which is a celebration of the Christian experience of salvation and hope. It is at the same time a declaration of black selfhood which is expressed through the very personal medium of music.⁶⁴

Finally and significantly, Williams-Jones listed an array of gospel vocal devices that she argued were central to gospel music expression. She firmly established the centrality and significance of the role of the gospel singer within African American gospel music, and argued for its acceptance within the broader community of traditional artistic expression.

Gospel singing style is in large measure the essence of gospel. It is a performer's art and a method of delivering lyrics which is as demanding in vocal skills and technique as any feat in Western performance practice.⁶⁵

Horace Boyer is widely acknowledged as the most eminent scholar in the field, and his informed, insightful and defining research has become foundational to any study of African American gospel music. Boyer combined much of his doctoral and early scholarly research into one substantial document that succinctly examined African American musical, cultural and religious history, and the place of gospel music within "contemporary" African American and western popular culture.⁶⁶ Based on his observations of the developments in Jazz, he posed a significant question, articulating the concerns of many African American scholars, ministers and choral directors at

⁶⁴ Williams-Jones, "A Crystallization of the Black Aesthetic," 376.

⁶⁵ Williams-Jones, "Afro-American Gospel Music," 380.

⁶⁶ Horace Clarence Boyer, "Contemporary Gospel Music," *The Black Perspective in Music* 7 (Spring, 1979): 5-58.

that time; “Is it possible that one day gospel music will no longer belong to the church?”⁶⁷ Significantly, in part two of this article, “Characteristics and Style,” Boyer details some enlightening musical analyses which focused on some of the essential gospel vocal techniques, rhythmic improvisations, interpolations, gospel rhythmic sub-divisions and the effects of different tempi on gospel music expression. Additionally, Boyer also provides some notated examples of these techniques and musical expressions which ultimately clarify and amplify his well-constructed and insightful observations of African American gospel music performance practice. Lastly, he includes two revealing musical transcriptions, including one of Mahalia Jackson’s renditions of the hymn “Amazing Grace.” Boyer notates her improvisations, melismas and complex rhythmic interpretation and expression, highlighting the complexity of her performance in contrast to the relative simplicity of the original John Newton hymn score. Ultimately, it is Boyer’s foundational and groundbreaking research that underpins the analytical methodology that will be employed throughout this exegesis.

Finally, based on much of his extensive previous research, Boyer’s comprehensive, single-volume ethnomusicological and analytical study of African American gospel music and culture combines historical narrative and textual and musical analysis with detailed, biographical accounts of the leading exponents of gospel music and their contributions to the genre.⁶⁸ Boyer insightfully examines the development of African American religious practice, experience and musical expression, the various musical characteristics of gospel music as defined by their geographic location, and the effects of modern media such as radio and the recording industry on the spread,

⁶⁷ Boyer, “Contemporary Gospel Music,” 5.

⁶⁸ Horace Clarence Boyer, *The Golden Age of Gospel* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

commercialisation and globalisation of gospel music. The significance of Boyer's research to this field cannot be overstated. For example, the comprehensive Smithsonian Institute-sponsored study of African American gospel music, edited by Bernice Johnson Reagon, includes six articles by Boyer, in addition to excellent contributions from Portia Maultsby, Anthony Heilbut, Michael W. Harris and Pearl Williams-Jones.⁶⁹ Johnson-Reagon's editorial overview is succinct, pointed and challenging. She convincingly argues for the acceptance of African American gospel music in scholarly research and highlights the centrality of this defining music, and the worship tradition that surrounds it, to the origins and continuing development of contemporary popular music. Focussing on seminal figures within gospel, including Charles Tindley, Thomas Dorsey, Lucie Campbell, and W. H. Brewster, the depth of research in this work is remarkable, with the majority of the articles providing some useful analyses of gospel techniques and performance practices for some of gospel's most iconic performers and composers. However, Pearl Williams-Jones again draws attention to the general lack of research in this field, further anticipating the need for the type of analytical research documented in chapters two and three of this exegesis.

The gospel literature, while capturing the basic structure of the songwriter's or arranger's compositional style, did not capture or document the performance style of the singers. A gospel song cannot be realized from the written page. It is only in performance that it has life.⁷⁰

Boyer remains one of the few researchers who combines ethnomusicological and historical research with informed, articulate and revealing musical analysis, and, significantly, the analytical methods he employs derive predominantly from the

⁶⁹ Bernice Johnson Reagon, ed., *We'll Understand It Better By And By* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992).

⁷⁰ Pearl Williams-Jones, *We'll Understand It Better By And By*, 264.

western classical tradition. As a result, his research opens a window of understanding into the complexity of nuance and gesture, coded language and expressive power of African American gospel music that is more universally accessible. However, although the research of Boyer and Williams-Jones is illuminating and significant in this regard, it is the relatively limited breadth of their descriptive and notated analyses, in conjunction with the paucity of similar analytical research available from other scholarly sources, which continues to highlight the need for further research in this field and which, ultimately, this exegesis seeks to address.

African American gospel music has now made a significant connection with musicians, singers and audiences within Australia, in so doing it has successfully crossed some significant cultural and geographic boundaries. Through an in-depth descriptive analysis of historical and contemporary performance practice, this study will ultimately attempt to explore how the context and culture of African American gospel music is represented and reproduced within the cultural traditions of contemporary Australia, and how this musical tradition has evolved in Tasmania.

CHAPTER 1

African American Culture and Music: Gospel Music to the 1930's.

It is possible to construct an interpretation of the experience of the African in British America and subsequently the United States upon the assumption that black life has oscillated between two extremes of perfect separation and perfect integration. . . . However, the nature of the society in which blacks have found themselves in America has prevented them from achieving the relative stability promised by either extreme. . . . Like some giant pendulum, the weight of black existence swings with a rush through a centre line between separation and integration, but even as it moves beyond, the forces pulling it back increase with geometric rapidity.⁷¹

The enforced enslavement and transportation of Africans into America, particularly the Southern states, was underpinned by an oppressive and carefully constructed system of acculturation colloquially referred to as “seasoning.”⁷² Initially, the dominant European, English-American and Protestant culture and ethic sought to remove from the slave all connection to their former life, as the brutal new world birthed and immersed a new sub-culture into a plantation mentality which eventually included a new religious context as well. This new, culturally stylised monotheistic religion, was superimposed on an African ontologically hierarchical pantheism⁷³ that

⁷¹ Williamson, *A Rage For Order*, 3.

⁷² Williamson, *A Rage For Order*, 3.

⁷³ The origins of African religious belief and practice is as complex as the continent is extreme. Conventionally described as basically animistic or pluralist in nature, such definitions preclude the hierarchical nature of the spiritual importance that many African traditional religions ascribed to various biological life forms or physical phenomena. The peoples of traditional South Benin (West Africa) for example certainly believed in a single, all-powerful creator being (*Mawu*), significantly predating both Judaism, Islam and Christianity, providing a conceptual framework at least for Africans in their understanding of the Judeo-Christian concept of “God.” A further detailed analysis of traditional African religions can be accessed through *Traditional Religion in Africa: the Vondon phenomenon in Benin* at (<http://afrikaworld.net/afrel/zinzindohoue.htm>) through the Library of Congress, African and Middle Eastern Division, Collections and Services Directorate, (<http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/amed/benin/resources/benin-religion.html>).

did ultimately resonate with African Americans, who began to manifest their evolving spirituality both physically and musically.

Music is one of the key expressions of corporate spirituality, and where a community undergoes a period of intense renewed spiritual awareness, new music is often created to better express this spiritual revitalisation. With the immergence of the religious “awakenings” in America throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, African Americans were pressed into the adoption of Christian spirituality and practices as part of their subjugation to this foreign culture. By 1750 however the enforced migrations slowed in volume and the landowners and authorities seemed less vigilant and obsessed with acculturation.⁷⁴ The “revolutionary society” in the time of Jefferson and Munroe had, along with much of Europe, begun to express their opposition to slavery, although many in America remained disturbingly ambivalent to the issue of “blackness” and what it really meant. By 1820, serious consideration had been given to the prospect of resettling black slaves back in Africa⁷⁵ – Liberia was established by white America for this very reason – but for many of those of African descent born now in America, Africa held little or no relevance. It was not until 1831 when Nat Turner led a slave uprising that became responsible for the violent murder of fifty-seven whites, including non slave owners, women and children, that the previous “ambivalence and drift” came to a cataclysmic halt.⁷⁶ The considerable fear that this uprising reignited in the white population paved the way for the defeat of a motion proposing the emancipation of African American slaves in the Virginian

⁷⁴ Williamson, *A Rage For Order*, 4-7.

⁷⁵ Williamson, *A Rage For Order*, 7.

⁷⁶ Williamson, *A Rage For Order*, 7.

legislature in 1831-32, a decision that was to become one of the most significant factors in the continuing development of American culture.⁷⁷

Sacred singing in the African American tradition, independent of mainstream white society, began to emerge during this period between the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries within the context of two new religious movements known as the “Great Awakening” and the “Camp Meeting Revival” or “Second Great Awakening.” It is during this period that a large number of slaves were converted to Christianity, and Boyer writes that “although the slaves sang like their masters when they attended services with them, reports of slaves singing sacred music independently began to surface in the 1750’s.”⁷⁸ The slaves used a style of responsorial singing known as “lining out,”⁷⁹ a derivative of Anglican chant, which the slaves called “raising” a hymn. However, the slaves structured the hymn quite differently to their masters, where the leader or “exhorter” would often chant two lines at a time, and the group or congregational response would mostly be to a tune unrelated to the original chant melody.⁸⁰ The congregational response would also vary from European tradition with the addition of ornamentations to the line (slurs, bends, slides, held tones etc.) in the form of a kind of collective improvisation.

Later, during the “camp meeting” revival movement that occurred during the Second Great Awakening between 1780 to 1830,⁸¹ the African American slaves developed a

⁷⁷ Williamson, *A Rage For Order*, 9.

⁷⁸ Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 7.

⁷⁹ Lining out was also referred to as “Dr. Watts hymn singing,” and was a simplified way of performing hymns. Hymns would be sung to a collection of familiar tunes, with each line of text/music initiated and sung by a leader, with the group or congregation response following. Although outside the scope of this exegesis, William T. Dargen writes in depth on this subject in his book; *Lining Out The Word*, (Berkley: University of California Press, 2006).

⁸⁰ Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 7.

⁸¹ Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 82-83.

unique singing practice that drew considerable criticism from the white orthodox church leaders, significantly because of the very defining “African-ness” of the musical expression itself.

First, the black campers were holding songfests away from proper supervision, and this was undesirable in the eyes of the church fathers. They were singing songs of their own composing, which was even worse in the eyes of the officials. The texts of the composed songs were not lyric poems in the hallowed tradition of Watts, but a stringing together of isolated lines from prayers, the Scriptures, and orthodox hymns, the whole made longer by the addition of choruses or the interjecting of refrains between the verses. Finally, for their composed religious songs they used tunes that were dangerously near to being dance tunes in the style of slave jubilee melodies. . . . from such practices emerged a new kind of religious song that became the distinctive badge of the camp-meeting movement.⁸²

The louder and community-oriented nature of the camp meetings demanded a noisier, more lively musical expression which evolved into the camp-meeting hymn and the spiritual song. Southern further describes the key features of these expressions as being “... the chorus and/or refrain, the popular tune or folksong-style melody, and the rough and irregular couplets that made up the texts.”⁸³ The camp meeting spiritual emphasised scriptural passages and “praising God,” which contrasted with the later intensely personal Negro spiritual that addressed issues of oppression, discrimination and struggle. Further to this, the African American slaves also developed a religious dance ceremony where the slaves would audibly shuffle and stamp their feet whilst

⁸² Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 85.

⁸³ Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 86.

physically moving in a in a circular motion in a holy dance ritual called a “ring shout.”⁸⁴

The development of the African American sacred music tradition is in part inspired by these intense religious “awakenings,” as well as the significant influences of the Western European religious and musical traditions, and although disparaged by many church authorities did elicit a curious interest – even respect – from the broader American society.

It was not the sophistication of the text nor the brilliance of the melody and harmony of these [camp meeting] songs, most often consisting of a verse and a chorus that so inspired the slaves and caused wonderment among white listeners. Rather it was the release and satisfaction that the songs brought to the singer. Melodies had only a few tones, often as few as five, and were laden with blue (or flattened) notes that would later serve as one of the principal elements of the blues. Harmonies were those of Protestant hymns, but rhythms were the intricate patterns remembered from Africa. Singers made no pretence of placing the voice “in the head”, as was the practice of European singing masters, but chose the voice of those “crying in the wilderness”.⁸⁵

Underpinning this new musical and indeed physical expression is a deeply embedded cultural trace that originates in Africa. Indeed, it is this deeply embedded cultural trace which gave life and breath to the new and developing African American culture and which finds its most articulate expression and in their sacred music. Dr Joyce Marie Jackson, Associate Professor in the Department of Geography and Anthropology at Louisiana State University in part supports the notion of a cultural

⁸⁴ The term “shouting” refers to the sound the feet, and not voice as the name initially suggests. For an in depth examination of the camp spiritual and the ring shout, refer to Eileen Southern’s *The Music Of Black Americans*, pp 84-89.

⁸⁵ Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 11.

trace stating that, "... the gospel music tradition offers absolute evidence of the existence of a continuum in African American music, and a 'continuity of consciousness'."⁸⁶ I would go further than this however, in that the deeply embedded cultural trace represents the totality of African cultural, spiritual and indeed musical experience and tradition that resides in both conscious and sub-conscious thought, and that resonates throughout every aspect of African American community life, expression and culture. It certainly resonates within their interpretations of the musical traditions of European Protestant hymnody. It is here that European and African traditions collide, creating a complex dialectic, born of a world founded on slavery and human suffering, that then gave rise to a unique musical art form.

Gospel Music's First Period: 1900-1929⁸⁷

If a basic theoretical concept of a black aesthetic can be drawn from the history of the black experience in America, the crystallization of this concept is embodied in Afro-American gospel music.⁸⁸

African American culture began to have a significant effect on mainstream America during the early twentieth century as the "Great Migration"⁸⁹ saw several million African Americans relocate from the South into the Northeast and Midwest in the

⁸⁶ Joyce Marie Jackson, "The Changing Nature of Gospel Music," 186.

⁸⁷ These historical periods were first suggested in Dr. Joyce Marie Jackson's "The Changing Nature of Gospel Music: A Southern Case Study," *African American Review* Volume 29 no. 2 (1995): 185-200.

⁸⁸ Williams-Jones, "Afro-American Gospel Music: A Crystalization of the Black Aesthetic," 373.

⁸⁹ The "Great Migration" refers to the movement of several million African Americans into the Northeast and Midwest of the United States from the South. This began as early as 1879 - 1881, where 60,000 African Americans migrated to Kansas and Oklahoma, and then in far greater numbers from 1900 until the Great Depression of the 1930s. The outbreak of WWI was the most significant catalyst for this mass migration of people, heralding a dramatic increase in employment opportunities for African Americans as a result of the cut in flow of immigrant labour from Europe. A complete analysis of African American population movements can be found at the *Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture* (<http://www.inmotionaame.org/home.cfm>).

pursuit of greater social and economic opportunity, and freedom from the oppressive Jim Crow laws⁹⁰ legislated in much of the South. Sadly, much of this promise was not realized, and with the onset of the Great Depression in the 1930s, the African American communities' economic and social circumstances were less favourable than ever. Forced into a sub-standard and considerably more overcrowded industrial environment with little or no opportunities for employment, the African American community turned to the church, which became for many the only practical means for sustaining existence and indeed, life itself.

African Americans confronted their difficulties through the process of consciously recreating rituals, continuing certain performance practices, and maintaining those values and aesthetics which were at the focal point of their mental and physical survival in the rural South. They had to unite, and once more the most important context for this union was the African American folk church – not the middle-class-oriented mainstream establishment churches, but the small “storefront” churches which served as the contemporary counterpart to the “praise houses” of the institutionalised slavery era.⁹¹

However, these more recent migrants from the South brought with them a religious context that was not ideally suited to the now established African American church in the North, which held the view that assimilation of European-American religious practices and music was ultimately the only way to promote the religious and cultural advancement of African Americans in America. As a result, the Southern African American migrants in the North began to form new “churches” that did not always align with or belong to the established mainstream church structure, but were mostly independent, “storefront” churches, which Joyce Marie Jackson aligns with both the

⁹⁰ Distinct from the Black Codes (1800 – 1856), the Jim Crow laws, named after a minstrel character, were enacted in the predominantly southern states of America and enforced between 1876 and as late as 1975, mandating “separate but equal” status for African Americans and enforcing segregation on the basis of race. The most common laws prohibited intermarriage and ordered businesses and public institutions to keep black and white clientele separate.

⁹¹ Jackson, “The Changing Nature of Gospel,” 189.

“praise houses” and “hush harbours” of the slaves.⁹² The storefront churches were not bound to traditional doctrine or theology, and they promoted a freedom of expression within their worship that was “manifested in spontaneous testimonies, prayers, and praises from individuals.”⁹³ The significance of this new religious movement – the physicality of body movement, the hypnotic and driving, incessant nature of the rhythm, and the individuality, energy and expressive power of the vocal styles – is that in totality, it reflected African American spirituality and musical sensibilities. Mahalia Jackson, one of Gospel’s greatest singers, described one of these churches in her autobiography *Movin’ On Up*.

These people had no choir and no organ. They used the drum, the cymbal, the tambourine, and the steel triangle. Everybody in there sang and they clapped and stamped their feet and sang with their whole bodies. They had a beat, a powerful beat, which we held onto from our slavery days, and their music was so strong and expressive it used to bring tears to my eyes. I believe the blues and jazz and even rock ‘n’ roll got their beat from the Sanctified Church.⁹⁴

It is within the context of the socio-economic adjustment that occurred as a result of the Great Migration and the Great Depression that the musical, physical and spiritual expressions and practises of the antebellum South provide a significant catalyst for

⁹² “Hush harbours” were places where African American slaves would gather at night in secret to praise and worship God. The physical expressions of their moments of religious ecstasy were often so demonstrative and loud that the group would fear discovery and suppress the individual by placing their hands over their mouth, placing their head over a bowl etc, so as to contain the sound. Later, when southern African American migrants living in the north discovered there was little place for their religious experience and expression within the mainline northern churches, they began meeting together in storefronts and backrooms where they could express their spirituality in a manner that drew upon their now defined southern tradition.

⁹³ Jackson, “The Changing Nature of Gospel Music,” 189.

⁹⁴ Mahalia Jackson, *Movin’ On Up*, (New York: Hawthorn Publishing, 1966), 32.

the Azusa Street⁹⁵ revival in California in 1906, producing, amongst many other socio-spiritual phenomena, a new, vibrant and unique form of music. In addition to the more conservative gospel hymns and songs, one significant feature of the revival meetings was the highly improvised song sung by an individual as they “came through” – an expression denoting a state of heightened spiritual awareness as a result of having been “saved and baptised in the Holy Ghost,” physically manifested by the psycho-spiritual phenomena glossolalia. These songs were relatively simple in their melodic and harmonic structure, but were rhythmically intricate in their performance. The sincerity and power in the delivery of these songs often belied the lack of vocal training and technique that the performers possessed, but they eventually became one of the most significant features of a new form of church worship service, and it became the main attractant for new congregational members to the developing and many faceted African American Pentecostal church. It is this style of singing – highly emotional, individual, spontaneous, physical and, in terms of Western music performance practice, unconventional – that began to define the nature of “gospel performance” throughout the twentieth century.

When the spirit was especially high, the congregation would respond to the songs by shaking their heads, swaying their bodies, clapping their hands, tapping or stomping their feet, and interjecting individual tonal and rhythmic improvisations onto an already rich palette of sound. The song leaders were the ministers, preachers, or singers whose authoritative voices were developed

⁹⁵The Azusa Street revival was initially a series of church services held in the Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission in Los Angeles. A “revival” or revival meeting was a series of evangelical church services designed to promote Christian “conversion” and spiritual revitalisation. It was not an African American phenomenon, but Boyer describes the Azusa Street revival as being uniquely African American, having four distinctive attributes distinguishing it from previous religious revivals; it was initiated by and for African Americans; being “saved” was physically manifest by glossolalia or “speaking in tongues” (a foreign language unknown to the utterer but facilitated by the “indwelling” of the Holy Spirit); African Americans invited whites to attend these meetings and insisting on complete interracial participation; furthermore, the music used reflected issues unique to the African American community. For further information, refer to Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 12-13.

out of the necessity to cut through the responsive singing, clapping, stamping, and shouting of large congregations.⁹⁶

The Western European tradition of purity and clarity of tone – a tradition that requires access to a historical performance practice and pedagogy not readily available to the early gospel singers – was not a significant component of the gospel vocal style, which is subjugated to the expressive and delivered with tremendous power and conviction, borne of experience. Additionally, Dr. Anthony Heilbut also supports this in his description of the vocal characteristics of one of Gospel's early and best-loved vocal performers, Sallie Martin.

Indeed, nobody could call Sallie Martin the greatest gospel singer. Her voice is all wrong, rough, gnarled, wide ranging and shaky in all its registers from bass to second tenor. But “yet and still,” Sally Martin is the embodiment of true gospel music. . . . More than this, she is an overwhelming performer, impossible to “outshout.” Sallie’s authority derives from the bad voice, the palpable sense that she’s got nothing going for her but energy and will.⁹⁷

The individual characteristics of each voice, that may well be described by conventional performance practice as being “all wrong,” in fact produces an immediately recognizable and identifiable tonal character for each individual singer that adds to the power of the performance. The “bad voice” as Heilbut describes it, contains and powerfully conveys the fragility and uncertainty of the African American condition; a condition that is implicitly understood, shared by the whole community, and one which continues to inform, reinforce and recontextualize the nature of the deeply embedded cultural trace that forms the foundation of their

⁹⁶ Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 18.

⁹⁷ Heilbut, *The Gospel Sound*, 3.

community. Operating within a highly improvisational framework, each gospel performer was unique, as was each individual performance, and as a result, congregations and audiences ascribed as much importance and notoriety to a gospel singer's particular performance of a song and the context in which it was performed, as they did to the song itself.

The Musical and Cultural Antecedents of Gospel

The antecedents of the new gospel style centred on a complex socio-religious, musical and cultural dialectic that was taking place in the greater American society during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The traditional Methodist Episcopal church⁹⁸ had been challenged by their own breakaway "Holiness" Movement that arose from the 1867 "National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness."⁹⁹ The original tenets of this movement espoused salvation through the forgiveness of sins by faith in Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, resulting in a spiritual "perfectionism," that was in part a reaction to what the leaders of this movement perceived to be an unhealthy ecclesiasticism and declining morality in the church.

One of the movement's key figures, Charles Parham, founded the Bethel Bible

⁹⁸ The original Methodist movement was founded in England in 1729 by a group of Oxford University students, including John and Charles Wesley. Rejecting the fundamentals of Calvinist doctrine – most notably the emphasis on predestination – Methodism espoused Christian perfection and salvation through faith. This new doctrine attracted a large following from within England's working classes for whom the traditional formalism of the dominant church of England held little relevance. Methodism was brought to America by Irish and English migrants during the late eighteenth century where Methodist societies were formed in New York, Philadelphia and Pipe Creek in Maryland as early as 1766. John Wesley sent the first Methodist missionaries to America in 1769, and one of the most influential of these, Francis Asbury, was commissioned in 1771. The Methodist Episcopal church in America was officially organised as a body separate from the English Methodist structure during the "Christmas Conference" in Baltimore, Maryland in 1784. American Methodism emphasised universal salvation, practical ethics and a personal religious experience that was to attract a large number of converts during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

⁹⁹ The National Camp Meeting Associations espoused a "Holiness" theology (spiritual perfectionism) that was viewed negatively by the existing larger Methodist body. A. Gregory Schnieder provides an in depth examination of this important conflict in his article "A Conflict of Associations: The National Camp Meeting Association versus the Methodist Episcopal Church," *Church History* (June 1997).

College in Topeka, Kansas, to teach the tenets of this new movement, and it was there in 1901 that an individual by the name of Agnes Ozman experienced the spiritual phenomena of glossolalia or “speaking in tongues.”¹⁰⁰ The practice and theology associated with possession by the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues directly impacts the development of gospel music. It was James Seymour, a student of Parham, who began his ministry at the Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission at Azusa Street, Los Angeles in 1906, who, having studied the tenets of the Holiness movement, preached the doctrine of “baptism in the Holy Ghost and its physical manifestations” and witnessed the outbreak of a significant “revival,” widely reported by American press, that underpins the formation of three of the most significant Christian denominations in the United States: The Assemblies of God, which, under Charles Parham broke with Azusa Street theology, rejecting the emotionalism associated with speaking in tongues; The Church of Christ (Holiness) which, founded by Charles Price Jones in 1920, accepted but did not insist on tongues; and The Church of God in Christ, founded by Charles Harrison Mason in 1915, which fully embraced the new “Pentecostalism”¹⁰¹ (See Table 2 and Table 3).

¹⁰⁰ Glossolalia is first recorded in the Bible in book of Acts 2: 1 – 13, and is associated with a state of heightened or extreme psycho-spiritual awareness brought on by a “spiritual possession” or indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost is the third and equal constituent of the central Christian theological concept of the “Trinity.”

¹⁰¹ Jones and Mason were originally expelled from the Jackson Baptist Association for embracing “Holiness” theology – the belief in the centrality of spiritual perfection. They formed the “Christ Association of Mississippi of Baptised Believers in Christ” in 1900, and take the name “Church of God In Christ” in 1906. Mason investigates the Azusa revival in 1906, embraces Pentecostalism and incorporates COGIC (Holiness-Pentecostal) in 1915, splitting with Jones, who retains his Holiness theology but rejects the need for glossolalia, and founds the “Church Of Christ (Holiness),” chartered in Mississippi in 1920.

Table 2: Antecedents of Gospel Timeline A.

Date	Key Event	Descriptor and Outline	Key Figures	Key Publications & Music
1735	Great Awakening	New music written to express new spiritual awareness and intensity. Music is lively and energetic in contrast to the traditional long meter hymns. Structure is generally strophic - Verse/Chorus	Isaac Watts (1674-1748) John Wesley (1703-1791)	<i>Hymns and Spiritual Songs</i> (1707) <i>Collection of Hymns for Social Worship</i> (1753; 1765)
1750	Slaves independently singing spiritual songs	Adaptation of “Lining out” referred to as “raising” a hymn. Predominantly “call and response” between a leader (exhorter) and group (congregation). Survives today as the “Baptist lining hymn.”		
1800	Second Great Awakening – Camp Meeting Revival.	“Camp meeting spirituals” reflecting new spiritual awareness and intensity. Music has a “lilt and rhythm.” Slaves gathering together and singing with great intensity for long periods, with shaped note melodies and long repeated choruses set to march tempo.	John Wyeth (1770-1858) Asahel Nettleton (1783-1844)	Revival hymnals: <i>Repository of Sacred, Part Second</i> (1813) <i>Village Hymns for Social Worship</i> (1824)
1800	Second Great Awakening – Camp Meeting Revival.	“Shouting” - Performed in a circle and called a “ring shout.” “Shouting” refers to the noise of the feet, not the voice. From this point, rocking or moving in time to the singing becomes a feature of African American church music.		
1800	Second Great Awakening – Camp Meeting Revival.	Negro Spiritual Religious folksongs, extremely personal in character. Expresses slaves’ relation and attitude towards God, and their social condition. A combination of Protestant church harmonies and African rhythmic concepts and patterns.	Dates and composers of these compositions are largely unknown	“Steal Away” “Go Down, Moses” “Swing Low Sweet Chariot”
1867	National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness. First collection of Negro spirituals published. First concert performance by the Fisk Jubilee Singers in Nashville.	Militant evangelical texts and music to match their spiritual aggressiveness. Promoted spiritual “perfection” to counter ecclesiasticism and sterile intellectualism. Belief in Holy Spirit possession and glossolalia paved the way for the Azusa Street revival. Fisk University teacher George L. White trains promising African American singers in music. Permitted to sing “their own music” as well as standard classical repertoire, the Fisk Jubilee Singers are the first to bring African American religious music to the attention of broader American public and eventually Europe as well.	William Cowper (1731-1800)	“Are You Washed In The Blood?” <i>Slave songs of the United States</i> (1867) “Home Sweet Home” “Go Down Moses” “Keep Me from Sinking Down”
1872	“World Peace Jubilee” concert in Boston.	Gilmore’s choir for this event numbered twenty thousand with an orchestra of two thousand. Eileen Southern states that the musical result was “disastrous” ¹⁰² but the Fisk Jubilee Singers vocal ability “rescues” the concert to the overwhelming plaudits of the audience.	Produced by Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore (1829-1892)	“The Battle Hymn Of The Republic”
1875	First publishing of “Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs.”	Development of the “typical” gospel hymn. Contributions from Sankey, Phillip P. Bliss, and Phillip Phillips. 8 bar verse/chorus structure. Simple melodies, predominance of dotted eighth notes in both melody and accompanying rhythm.	Ira Sankey (1840-1908) William Doane (1832-1915) J.P.Webster (1819-1875)	“Faith Is the Victory” “To God Be The Glory” “In The Sweet By And By”

¹⁰² Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 229.

Table 3: Antecedents of Gospel Timeline B.

Date	Key Event	Descriptor and Outline	Key Figures	Key Publications & Music
1875-	Development of “white” evangelistic hymns by African American composers.	African American composers influenced by white evangelistic services and hymns. Hymns are “revivalist” in content, emphasising the need for spiritual and physical transformation through salvation.	William Bradbury (1816-1868) Robert Lowry (1826-1899) Fanny Crosby (1820-1915)	“Don’t Forget The Sabbath” “Shall We Gather At The River” “To God Be The Glory”
1867	National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness.	The “Holiness” movement breaks away from Episcopal Methodist church. Woodruff authors the introduction to original the pamphlet outlining the tenets of the Holiness movement.	George W. Woodruff (1873 – 1929)	
1882	<i>New African American Hymnal</i> published.	Marshall Taylor published the first new hymnal for African American congregations since emancipation. It contained 150 songs (plus seven with text only) written by whites, African American gospel songs and Negro spirituals.	Marshall W. Taylor (1846-1887).	<i>A Collection of Revival Hymns and Plantation Melodies.</i>
1893	First African American publishing of songs in the Negro spiritual, pre gospel style.	The <i>Harp of Zion</i> includes compositions by various authors, including the publisher, William Sherwood. (Petersburg, Virginia). Melodic and harmonic construction of these songs foreshadows gospel.	William Henry Sherwood	<i>Harp Of Zion</i> “The Church is Moving On”
1899	Charles Price Jones first hymnal publication.	Jones’ compositions dealt directly with the feelings and expressions of the emancipated but still disenfranchised African American community. He espoused using no instruments for worship in line with his interpretation of New Testament practice.	Charles Price Jones (1865-1949)	<i>The Jesus Only Standard Hymnal.</i> “I’m Happy With Jesus Alone” “The Harvest Is Past”
1901	First publication of Charles Tindley’s compositions.	Tindley’s music facilitates the transition from Antebellum Negro spiritual to gospel. It is first published by C. Austin Miles.	Charles Albert Tindley (1851-1933)	<i>New Songs of the Gospel.</i> “I’ll Overcome Someday” “What Are They Doing In Heaven?”
1903	Bethel Bible College founded in Topeka Kansas.	Charles Parham teaches the tenants of the NCMA – particularly the practice of “speaking in tongues.”	Charles Parham (1873-1929).	
1905	All male-voice quartet.	Fisk University uses a male quartet, not the small mixed voice ensemble favoured previously. This paves the way for the dominant male quartet’s of the 1930s, 40s and 50s.	Fisk Jubilee Quartet.	
1905	Charles Tindley co-founds the <i>Soul Echoes Publishing Company</i> .	Tindley wrote more than forty-five gospel hymns, many becoming part of the canon of African American music. A significant preacher and tireless worker for civil rights, his music is widely used and reinterpreted by those influenced by the Azusa Street revival.	Charles Albert Tindley	“We’ll Understand It Better By And By” “Stand By Me” “Some Day”
1906	Azusa Street Revival	William Joseph Seymour, a student of Parham, moves to LA in 1906 as pastor of the Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission on Azusa Street. Preaches a doctrine of “baptism in the Holy Ghost,” manifested by “speaking in tongues” (glossolalia)	William Joseph Seymour (1870-1922)	

Table 3 Antecedents of Gospel Timeline B (cont.)

Date	Key Event	Descriptor and Outline	Key Figures	Key Publications & Music
1906-1915	Music at Azusa Street (a): The Protestant hymn.	The Protestant hymns of Watts, Webster, Sankey and Doane – in common usage throughout the American Christian church – were sung during the early days of Azusa revival (Figure 2). Typically 8 bar verse/chorus structure, proliferated with dotted eighth notes but with no allowance for improvisation or altered notes.	JP Webster (1819 – 1875) Ira Sankey (1840 – 1908) William Howard Doane (1889-1915)	“The Sweet By And By” “A Shelter in the Time of Storm” “What A Friend We Have In Jesus”
1906-1915	Music at Azusa Street (b): The Negro Spiritual.	Negro spirituals featured during the more emotional sections of the meetings. Boyer notes that “Songs that carried the message of a reward in heaven were especially favoured for the shout.” ¹⁰³	Traditional spiritual	“Glory, Glory Hallelujah!” “Great Day! Great Day!”
1906-1915	Music at Azusa Street (c): The improvised song.	These songs were improvised under the “power of the Spirit” with 3 or 4 note melodies, simple harmonic structures, and two or three lines of text. Performed with great rhythmic complexity, power and conviction by mostly untrained voices.	Spontaneously composed compositions	“Latter Rain Is Falling” “We Need Your Power Lord”
1906	“Coming through” ¹⁰⁴ of Jennie Evans	Evans physically manifests the possession Holy Ghost with glossolalia and as this news spread rapidly throughout Las Angeles, the influence and reach of Seymour’s theology, and therefore early gospel music, increased exponentially.	Jennie Evans (1893-1936)	Improvised songs were composed under the influence of the Holy Spirit.
1910	Jubilee Quartets	Jubilee quartets (mostly Baptist) avoided the excessive Holiness/Pentecostal vocal expressions pursuing the “raising of musical standards.” Employing a “trained” vocal sound, slower tempo songs, less melodic embellishment and a formal presentation, they favoured standard Protestant hymns over Pentecostal repetitive shouts. Fisk University were the first, followed by Hampton, Tuskegee, Utica, Mississippi and Wilberforce.	The Fisk Jubilee Quartet, The Foster Singers.	Standard repertoire includes Negro spirituals, Protestant hymns and white and black gospel hymns.
1914	Founding of Assemblies of God	Parham rejects the emotionalism associated with glossolalia at Azusa street and founds AOG, splitting the developing Pentecostal movement on issues of race and the physical expressions of the “baptism in the Holy Ghost.”	Charles Parham (1873-1929)	
1915	Founding of Church of God in Christ	Charles Harrison Mason, originally a Baptist preacher, accepts “holiness” theology originally proposing the name COGIC for his new church in 1897. A major influence in the development of gospel music, he uses individual performances to lift the worship into a frenzy, establishing the place of the “gospel soloist.”	Charles Harrison Mason (1866-1961)	“I’m A Soldier In The Army Of The Lord”
1915	The Jubilee moves towards “Folk Gospel.”	The Foster Singers were the first of the jubilee groups to begin the transition from University based singing groups to the new “gospel quartets.”	R.C. Foster, Norman McQueen, Fletcher Fisher.	
1915-	Folk Gospel and the gospel quartet.	The Foster Singers sound was characterised by barber shop-like harmonies, close blended voices and vocal bends, slides etc. The formal stage manner, vocal range, style and repertoire of its Jubilee predecessor is maintained, but it’s church influence draws out its “down home” sound i.e. more rhythmic and syncopated. Performance practice features a slight movement of the body, including a light slap on the thigh.	Blue Jay Singers, Birmingham Jubilee Singers (1926) Ensley Jubilee Singers and the Ravizee Singers (1929).	“I Heard the Preaching of the Elders” “Stroll Around Heaven”
1916	Founding of “Paradise Publishing Company.”	“Paradise Publishing” is founded by Charles Tindley, two of his sons and three other associates to publish Tindley’s music under the title “New Songs of Paradise!, No.1”.	Charles Albert Tindley.	“Let Jesus Fix It For You, Some Day” (“Beams of Heaven”)
1916	Popularity of Negro spirituals spreads.	Harry T. Burleigh publishes “Jubilee Songs of the United States of America,” making Negro spirituals available to concert singers and a much wider audience.	Harry T. Burleigh (1866-1949)	“Deep River”

¹⁰³ Boyer, *The Golden Age of Gospel*, 16.

¹⁰⁴ An expression denoting the spiritual condition of being “saved and filled with the Holy Ghost,” where glossolalia is usually present. See also footnotes 94 and 99.

Table 3 Antecedents of Gospel Timeline B (cont.)

Date	Key Event	Descriptor and Outline	Key Figures	Key Publications & Music
1916-	National Baptist Convention, USA	Lucie E. Campbell becomes one the most influential figures in gospel through her musical directorship of the NBC, USA and first copyrights her songs in 1919. She attracts major attention at the National Baptist Convention, USA after the premiere of her composition, <i>Something Within</i> . Her music was predominantly four-part homophonic and relied on the slower paced Baptist lining-hymn tradition. Committee member for "Gospel Pearls" publication.	Lucie E. Campbell (1885-1963)	"Something Within" (1919) "He Understands; He'll Say, 'Well Done.'" (1933)
1920	Founding of <i>Church of Christ (Holiness)USA</i> .	Also originally a Missionary Baptist preacher, Jones accepts Holiness theology renames his Mt Helm Baptist church in Jackson, Mississippi "Church of Christ" in 1896. A prolific composer of over 1000 songs, he directly addresses African American feelings and social condition.	Charles Price Jones (1865-1949)	"Deeper, Deeper Jesus Only"
1921	Release of "Gospel Pearls."	The National Baptist Convention recognises the place and importance of the new "gospel music" by publishing a collection of songs under the title "Gospel Pearls." By 1930, GP crossed significant denominational divides and was to found in the Baptist, Methodist and Pentecostal churches. It includes standard Protestant hymns, patriotic songs and the new "gospel" songs.	J.W. Howe & J.W. Steffe Charles Tindley CP Jones Thomas Dorsey	"Battle Hymn of the Republic" "Stand By Me" "I'm Happy with Jesus Alone" "If I Don't get There"
1921	Thomas Dorsey attends the National Baptist Convention.	Dorsey was greatly influenced by Tindley, particularly evident in his ability to write songs that used and ultimately defined the language of African Americans. In 1921, Dorsey hears the Reverend W. M. Nix sing for the first time at the NBC, which greatly influences his decision to write music for the church.	Thomas Andrew Dorsey	
1932	Thomas Dorsey and the "rise" of gospel blues.	Dorsey writes gospel songs with blues-like accompaniments that eventually define the gospel music genre. Incorporating African American musical, social and spiritual sensibilities, his songs are also reliant on the iconic, improvisational interpretative ability of the gospel singer.		"Take My Hand, Precious Lord" "Trusting In My Jesus" "If You See My Saviour"

Charles Albert Tindley

Although this exegesis will later explore in depth the defining influence of the interpretive and improvisational character of the African American gospel singer on the development of the gospel style, it is within the context of the foundational and transitional development of African American gospel music that the significance of composer and pastor Charles A. Tindley becomes apparent. “Neither spirituals or hymns, Tindley’s songs comprised a whole new genre.”¹⁰⁵ Tindley beautifully crafted familiar folk images, proverbs and references to culturally significant biblical stories into the fabric of his text, drawing and relying on the deeply embedded cultural trace of the African American community.

Tindley’s life was quite characteristic of the African American experience during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He had been a slave and had taught himself to read, working by day as a hod carrier¹⁰⁶ for a brick mason and as a sexton for his local Methodist church, whilst studying at night for the ministry. He then led his own church congregation for 30 years where his main ministry focussed on assisting African Americans in making the difficult adjustment from rural to urban city life, as he had done himself. His church programs offered educational night classes and a church saving plan to assist the people in acquiring a down payment for a home, as well as providing a network of people who had the means and inclination to provide opportunities for employment for African Americans. Reagon writes that, “within (Tindley’s) church, new practices were evolving for a new urban people, and

¹⁰⁵ Heilbut, *The Gospel Sound*, 23

¹⁰⁶ A hod was a tool used to carry bricks and mortar, and the hod carrier was like a bricklayer’s labourer, bearing the brunt of the physical work, carrying the “hod” up the scaffolding to the masons.

it was reflected on every level of his ministry.”¹⁰⁷ His music grew out of his own life experience and practice, often directly as extensions of his sermons, and as result, his music is borne of, and sustained and perpetuated by, the community and its physical and spiritual needs, its many trials and tribulations, and indeed its future aspirations, both worldly and heavenly.

Tindley’s music uniquely addressed African American religious and social sensibilities which is clearly illustrated in his composition “We’ll Understand It Better By and By” (Figure 1), which is today accepted by the wider African American Christian church community as “standard repertoire.”

¹⁰⁷ Bernice Johnson Reagon, *If You Go Don’t Hinder Me* (Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 16.

Figure 1: C. A. Tindley, “We’ll Understand It Better By And By.”¹⁰⁸

Charles Albert Tindley

Figure 1 displays the musical score for the hymn "We'll Understand It Better By And By" by C. A. Tindley. The score is written in 4/4 time and B-flat major. It includes a piano accompaniment and vocal parts for Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The lyrics are: "We are oft - entossed and driv'n on the rest - less sea of time, som - bre skies and howl - ing tem - pests oft suc - ceed a bright sun - shine, In that land of per - fect day, when the mists have rolled a - way, we will un - der - stand it bet - ter by and by. By and by when the morn - ing comes. When the saints of God are gath - ered home. We'll tell the sto - ry how we're o - ver come; for we'll". The score includes a repeat sign at measure 8 and a "Fine (next verse)" instruction. The final measure is marked "D.S." (Da Capo).

Chorus
By and by, when the morning comes,
When the saints of God are gathered home
We'll tell the story of how we've overcome,
For we'll understand it better by and by.

Verse 2
We are often destitute of the things that life demands
Want of food and want of shelter – thirsty hills and barren lands,
We are trusting in the Lord, and according to His word,
We will understand it better by and by.

¹⁰⁸ Warren, *Every Time I Feel The Spirit*, 182-184.

Written during the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and before the great depression (which would further disenfranchise a group of people barely getting by), its refrain of “We’ll Understand It Better By And By” struck a core chord in the hearts of African Americans and helped shape the music that would be called gospel.¹⁰⁹

Verse two in particular directly confronts the then social condition of the African American community, with the chorus reinforcing their singe hope of a heavenly and eternal reckoning and reward for their earthly trials and tribulations.¹¹⁰ This concept of eternal redemption – not only from “sin,” but also from all earthly trials – was understood by the African American community and articulated well before Tindley in traditional spirituals such as “Hold On” (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Traditional Spiritual, “Hold On.”

Traditional Spiritual

Keep yo' han' on a de plow. Hold on. Hold

on. No - ra, No - ra, let me come in. Do's all fast-ned an de win-ders pinned. *D.S.*

Keep yo' han' on a de plow, Hold on. Hold

Verse 2

Nora said, “Ya lost yo’ track,
Can’ plow straight an’
Keep a-lookin’ back.”

¹⁰⁹ Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 29.

¹¹⁰ The sentiment here also contains consternation and confusion, for even the title implicitly questions why a “just” God has permitted racism and slavery to remain institutionalised and unchallenged. The connection between this developing African American culture and that of the biblical Jewish community is profound in that God is portrayed as omnipotent and omnipresent: a God who will ultimately act to right all wrongs “put all wrongs to right,” a sentiment reflected in a popular African American colloquialism “He may not come when you want him, but He’ll always be right on time.”

“Hold On” exhorts those who are struggling with the hardships and trials of the physical world – meaning slavery for most – to “hold on,” because help and understanding are ultimately at hand, albeit in another, eternal and better life beyond the grave. It is interesting to note the way in which verse two of “Hold On” seamlessly weaves every day rural practice (not looking behind the plough i.e. keeping one’s eyes on a fixed point ahead, being the only way to keep the furrow straight) with both Old and New Testament story and theology.¹¹¹ In a more formal language, reflecting formal education, Tindley also employs similar duality in his text (“want of food and want of shelter – thirsty hills and barren lands”). However, the musical style and form belong to the Protestant hymn-writing tradition of Watts, Doane and Sankey. Characterised by a proliferation of dotted eighth notes, simple harmonic (chords I, II⁷, IV and V) and melodic (fundamentally pentatonic) formations and a repetitive verse-refrain form structure, these musical devices are also reflected in Tindley’s compositional style as is clearly evidenced in “We’ll Understand It Better By And By.” For example, Figure 3 (a) and Figure 3 (d) mark the “Verse” and “Refrain/chorus” structure, Figure 3 (b) illustrates the use of dotted eighth notes, Figure 3 (c) indicates the use of the major pentatonic scale in the melodic construction, and Figure 3 (e) denotes the simple harmonic structure.

¹¹¹ Genesis 19: 26, NIV. Lot’s wife forfeited her life for “looking back” as her friends and family in Sodom and Gomorrah were being destroyed by God for their sinfulness. Once an individual has made a decision to “follow Christ” they too are not to look back, regardless of their present circumstance.

Figure 3: Annotated score, “We’ll Understand It Better By And By.”

(a) Verse

We are oft - entossed and driv'n on the rest - less sea of time, som - bre

(b) Predominance of dotted eighth notes

skies and howl - ing tem - pests oft suc - ceed a bright sun - shine, In that

(c) Major pentatonic scale.

land of per - fect day, when the mists have rolled a - way, we will

un - der - stand it bet - ter by and by.

(d) Refrain (chorus).

By and by when the morn - ing comes. When the saints of God are gath - ered home. We'll

(e) Simple harmonic structure.

tell the sto - ry how we're o - ver come; for we'll un - der - stand it bet - ter by and by.

Tindley's music was one of the most significant cornerstones of African American gospel music. He drew heavily on the physical and spiritual aspects of African American life and in so doing was able to effortlessly transform folk images, proverbs and biblical stories into a musical form that was both unique to the African American community and one that was only fully understood by them. Tindley spoke in the language of the southern African American living in the North, " – most of them poor and illiterate – and who valued highly the simple, direct, and emotional style of life of which Tindley spoke."¹¹² Boyer further illustrates this point in his analysis of one of Tindley's hymns, "Here I Am, Send Me" (1911), taking as an example an original text from the Old Testament book of Isaiah¹¹³ and comparing it to Tindley's reinterpretation in his hymn.

If the Saviour wants somebody just to fill a humble place
And to show that to the lowly God will give sufficient grace
I am ready now to offer all I am, what-e'er it be
And to say to Him this moment, "Here am I, send me"¹¹⁴

Further to this, in "Leave It There," Tindley crystallises several key concepts that he then seamlessly interweaves from the gospels of Luke and Matthew and from the book of Acts¹¹⁵ illustrating both his ability to employ refined prose in describing and

¹¹² Horace Clarence Boyer, *We'll Understand It Better By And By*, ed. Bernice Johnson Reagon, (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press 1992), 61.

¹¹³ Is. 6:8. "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' Then said I, 'Here am I; send me'" NIV (New International Version).

¹¹⁴ Charles Tindley, "Here Am I, Send Me". Quoted by Horace Clarence Boyer, "Charles Albert Tindley: Progenitor of Black-American Gospel Music," *The Black Perspective In Music* Vol. 11, No. 2 (Autumn 1983), 113.

¹¹⁵ Luke 12:24. "Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!"

Matt. 11: 28-3. "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Acts 1:6. Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." NIV.

contrasting the experiences of rural and urban existence in a hymn text that again offers hope, as well as his considerable grasp and practical application of Christian theology.

If the world from you withhold of its silver and its gold
And you have to get along with meagre fare
Just remember how in His Word how He feeds the little bird
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.

Leave it there. Leave it there
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there
If you trust and never doubt he will surely bring you out
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.¹¹⁶

Tindley's music is constantly reinvented as each new generation, faced with their own "trials and tribulations," draws on tradition, this deeply embedded cultural trace, as a means of understanding, or indeed withstanding, the present with hope for the future.

Within the Black tradition, one is not really considered a singer until one has found one's own way of presenting a work. In a way, "Stand By Me" performed by harmonica virtuoso Elder Roma Wilson, the Five Blind Boys of Alabama, the Caravans, and the Violinaires are all original compositions based on the Tindley composition. They are singing Tindley's song transformed by their own creative interpretation....¹¹⁷

The "transformation" that Reagon describes is fundamental not only to Tindley's music, but to the development of African American culture. However, whether it is through the songs themselves, or the reinterpretation of his tunes – such as "We Shall

¹¹⁶ Charles A Tindley, "Leave It There." Quoted by Boyer, "Charles Albert Tindley: Progenitor of Black-American Gospel Music," *The Black Perspective In Music*, 118.

¹¹⁷ Johnson Reagon, *If You Don't Go, Don't Hinder Me*, 19.

Overcome” that later becomes the unified cry of Civil Rights Movement – Tindley’s music should be considered as foundation, constituent and catalyst for the deeply embedded cultural trace that is of such significance to the development of African American culture and tradition.

Gospel Music’s Second Period: 1930-1945

In the early to middle 1930’s, the first notes of gospel blues – a blend of sacred texts and blues tunes – were heard in Protestant black churches in the mid-west and northeast cities of the United States. To one group of African Americans who populated these churches, this music was crude: it harked back to the primitive “cornfield ditties” of enslavement. It seemed to confirm blacks’ inability to advance by not assimilating the music and liturgical practices of mainline, white Protestantism. To another group, usually composed of recently settled southern migrants, this music rekindled a spirit of worship that had been dampened by the European classical anthems and unimprovised hymns sung in these churches.¹¹⁸

The African American Great Migration began as early as 1870 and as many as two million African Americans relocated from the South into the North between 1910 and 1930, where, for example, by 1930 the African American population in Chicago increased from 44,000 in 1910 to 235,000 in 1930, with similar growth occurring in Detroit, New York and Philadelphia.¹¹⁹ The numbers of new migrants far exceeded the existing African American population in those cities, and they came from a world that was very different from their northern neighbours. They brought with them their

¹¹⁸ Harris, *The Rise Of Gospel Blues*, xvii.

¹¹⁹ The African American Mosaic, 2005, *Library of Congress Resource Guide for the Study of Black History and Culture*, available from <http://www.inmotionaame.org/home.cfm> ; Internet; accessed 2 March, 2007. & The Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/intro.html> In Motion: The African American Migration Experience.

“old time” religion and music, traditions that the established, “old-line” African American church¹²⁰ and general population in the north found regressive and primitive.¹²¹

Thomas Andrew Dorsey

One of these new immigrants, Thomas Andrew Dorsey – originally from Villa Rica, Georgia and one time blues pianist for Tampa Red and Ma Rainey – was greatly influenced by Tindley. Originally known as “Georgia Tom,” Dorsey’s sacred compositions, written mostly during the 1930s and 1940s, combined structural elements of blues and jazz with textual references that spoke not only to the poor and disenfranchised, but to the general population. It is Dorsey’s life, grounded in both the church and blues music, and in conjunction with his beautiful and uniquely African American prose, that becomes the very definition of gospel music from this time.

As with Tindley, Dorsey’s significance must be understood within the context of the African American church and the antecedents of the new Pentecostalism that were in existence even before his time. The Holiness movement, the revival at Azusa Street and the subsequent development of new denominations within the church had produced a considerable tension and disquiet within the Christian community, and, although the divide between the storefront and mainline churches that had arisen in

¹²⁰ The term “old-line” or “mainline” church describes the denominational grouping of northern African American churches (African Methodist Episcopal, Baptist), which favoured the more conservative and European Protestant forms of traditional Christian worship and practice.

¹²¹ A more detailed account of African American migration patterns can be found at The Schomburg Centre for research in Black Culture, *In Motion: The African American Migration Experience*, available from <http://www.inmotionaame.org/home.cfm?bhcp=1>; Internet; accessed 2 March, 2007.

the African American church community during the 1920s had largely been resolved by the 1930s, the style of music and worship remained contentious. Southern African American migrants had by the end of the 1920s outnumbered the existing African American populations in many of the larger northern cities, and the social and religious ideas and practices that they brought with them were quite different to those that had developed within the African American communities in the north. Many pastors and ministers began to adopt a more inclusive worship style into their church services in an attempt to satisfy both the southern “shouters” and the northern “non-shouters alike,”¹²² which resulted in a noticeable increase in the physicality and emotionalism present within the religious services that continued to cause debate within the African American religious community throughout the 1930s.¹²³

Dorsey’s compositions dominate the musical landscape from this time, and like Tindley’s music before him, became a significant element in the recontextualisation of the deeply embedded cultural trace within the African American community. As a blues player, Dorsey initially met with fierce opposition from the greater part of the church community – for whom blues was a very direct representation of and link to the “worldly and sinful life” that they had in fact rejected – and yet it is the blues implicit in his playing and subsequent compositions that underpins the development of gospel music. Heilbut quotes Dorsey as saying, “Blues is a part of me, the way I

¹²² In this context and meaning of the term “shouters” refers to the louder and so-called more “primitive” or physical religious and social expressions and practices of the southern African American migrant. For further information see Michael W. Harris, *The Rise Of Gospel Blues: The Music of Andrew Thomas Dorsey in the Urban Church* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 121-190.

¹²³ For further information on the nature of African American religious and social structures, practices and population distribution in the 1920s and 1930s, refer also to Horace R. Clayton and St. Claire Drake *Black Metropolis* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1946), 600-782.

play piano, the way I write.”¹²⁴ “You see, when a thing becomes a part of you, you don’t know when it’s gonna manifest itself. And it’s not your business to know or my business to know.”¹²⁵

Dorsey is, in essence, describing something of the nature of his community’s deeply embedded cultural trace; the totality of Dorsey’s physical and musical existence manifested itself in a unique form through his music that reinvents and recontextualises the nature of African American music and society.

Solo Gospel Blues

A unique and articulate assimilation of textual, melodic, rhythmic and harmonic traditions that are deeply embedded in African American life, Dorsey’s solo gospel blues developed from his unique musical background in and experience of both blues and African American sacred music.

By early spring 1932, two forms of gospel blues had emerged and were becoming acceptable as modes of music in old-line black churches. For the first of these, solo gospel blues, Dorsey was the most prominent in shaping it – especially its notated and printed forms – and in bringing it out before the public. This form also evolved most clearly out of Dorsey’s life history and thus may be considered more the product of Dorsey’s creation than any style of music he played. . . .¹²⁶

Dorsey’s lyrics capture the essence of his community, personalising their hopes and fears in a Christian context and language that is readily and only fully understood by

¹²⁴ Heilbut, *The Gospel Sound*, 21.

¹²⁵ Heilbut, *The Gospel Sound*, 28

¹²⁶ Harris, *The Rise Of Gospel Blues*, 209.

that same community as the following extract from his song “The Lord Will Make A Way Somehow” clearly illustrates.

Like a ship that’s tossed and driven
Battered by an angry sea
And when the storms of life are raging
And their fury falls on me

Lord I wonder many times what I’ve done
That makes this race so hard to run
I say unto my soul be patient
The Lord will make a way somehow

So many nights I tossed and turned
Wondering what the day would bring
And I say to my soul take courage
The Lord will make a way somehow¹²⁷

The fear that Dorsey underlines here would have resonated strongly with a community that in a very real sense had little control over what the “next day” would bring. Dorsey, like Tindley before him, merges biblical reference and metaphor (for example, a ship tossed and driven, angry sea, race so hard to run), the realities of African American life (so many nights I tossed and turned, wondering what the day would bring), and hope (take courage, the Lord will make a way somehow) in a crystallized, beautifully poetic form. His lyrics speak directly to the downtrodden, the poor, the disempowered and the oppressed, and such is the power, beauty and resonance of his prose that many of his phrases become part of everyday African American dialect, spoken from the street to the pulpit.

For example, in uttering a prayer, one could simply say, “Take my hand, precious Lord.” That’s a prayer. If Dorsey wanted to express the joy of

¹²⁷ Thomas Dorsey, “The Lord Will Make A Way Somehow.” Quoted by Sims Warren, *Every Time I Feel The Spirit*, 152.

conversion and subsequent salvation, he would place the expression in the cadence of the street with “I can’t forget it, can you?” If one of the sisters wanted to give thanks for living a Christian life and the rewards that she would receive from it, she’d sum it all up by saying simply “There will be peace in the valley for me someday.”¹²⁸

Horace Boyer completed an analytical study of 158 of Dorsey’s compositions, identifying twelve key musical elements that were characteristic of his musical output,¹²⁹ and which are extrapolated and identified here in Figure 4.

¹²⁸ Boyer, *We’ll Understand It Better By And By*, ed. Johnson Reagon, 143.

¹²⁹ Boyer, *We’ll Understand It Better By And By*, ed. Johnson Reagon, 143-163

Figure 4: Key Elements of Dorsey's Musical Output – Boyer.

Melodic Construction.

- a. Easy tessitura (for an average singer)
- b. Use of “gapped” scale, predominantly pentatonic
- c. Use of added chromatic tones to the diatonic scale
- d. Use of flattened tones (7th and 3rd)

Rhythmic Division.

- e. Shift in textual emphasis to create syncopation (Je-SUS)
- f. Use of triplets in melodic construction
- g. Use of *four-to-the-bar* rhythmic emphasis of each quarter note.
- h. All 158 compositions, regardless of set time signature, were interpreted as 12/8 (triplet subdivision)

Harmony and Structure.

- i. Simple harmony, mostly chords I – IV - V
- j. All chords could have flattened sevenths added
- k. Use of verse-chorus pattern, often 8 bars per section
- l. Use of chorus-verse-special chorus (vamp)

Dorsey's use of flattened tones is indicative of his understanding of the African American vocal tradition. The "gaps" that his use of the pentatonic scale allowed, in addition to the syncopated re-emphasis of specific words, reflected the natural shifts in rhythmic emphasis in African American speech patterns. His interpretation of all simple time signatures into compound subdivisions illustrates an element of performance practice that was implicit for gospel musicians but not written, not unlike the "swing" in jazz or indeed the rhythmic interpretation in sixteenth-century performance practice.¹³⁰ Lastly, Dorsey's use of a verse-chorus structure, with the addition of the extra chorus or "vamp," continues to influence gospel composition into the twenty-first century.

The Vamp

The "vamp" that Dorsey created was a new section at the conclusion of a piece, usually at the end of a repeated chorus, that often used a crystallised version of one of the key lines or themes set to a new, simple, repetitive chord sequence. Boyer describes it as "... the repetition of the same musical elements to different words, bringing the progress of the music to a halt for a period resulting in a section of repetition called a 'vamp.'"¹³¹ The gifted gospel singer would improvise additional text over the repetitive chord sequence, personalising and adding further meaning to the existing text and intensifying the emotional tension. The Ward Singers provide an excellent example of this device at the conclusion of their 1949 recording of "Surely God Is Able," with soloist Marion Williams employing selections of rhyming

¹³⁰ For example, all of Dorsey's pieces written in 4/4 time signatures were played as if they were written in 12/8, so that the crotchet beat always implied a triplet quaver subdivision.

¹³¹ Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 110.

couplets¹³² in her improvisation over the single chordal accompaniment (see Figure 5 and CD-A: Tr 1).

Figure 5: Ward Singers Vamp, “Surely God Is Able.”
CD-A: Tr. 1

Couplet 1a	Marion Williams	He'll be your friend -
	<i>Backing Vocals</i>	<i>um-hum</i>
Couplet 1b	MW	when you're friendless.
	<i>BV</i>	<i>oh yeah</i>
Couplet 2a	MW	He's a mother -
	<i>BV</i>	<i>um-hum</i>
Couplet 2b	MW	to the motherless.
	<i>BV</i>	<i>oh-yeah</i>
Couplet 3a	MW	He's a father -
	<i>B V</i>	<i>um-hum</i>
Couplet 3b	MW	to the fatherless.
	<i>BV</i>	<i>oh yeah</i>
Couplet 4a	MW	He's your joy -
	<i>BV</i>	<i>um-hum</i>
Couplet 4b	MW	when you're in sorrow.
	<i>BV</i>	<i>oh yeah</i>
Couplet 5a	MW	He's your hope -
	<i>BV</i>	<i>um-hum</i>
Couplet 5b	MW	for tomorrow.
(continues)		

Ward's arrangement and use of Dorsey's vamp draws on an established African American musical tradition through its employment of extemporisation, rhyming couplets, call and response and specifically repetition.

Clara [Ward] knew that repetition is the most important element in African and African American music for getting the message across and employed it judiciously in this recording. The vamp became so important in gospel that for

¹³² The use of rhyming couplets was employed in the Negro spiritual, where the singer would insert a number of couplets into their extemporised melody and lyric. The couplets, and to a lesser extent quatrains, were drawn from a collection of phrases that had evolved over time and that had become part of the tradition, and that were well known by the community.

the next forty years there would be very few gospel songs that did not employ the device.¹³³

The vamp develops a highly personalised and almost hypnotic repetitive character that becomes central to gospel music expression, and it transports something of the physicality and emotionalism of antebellum African American spirituality into the context and culture of contemporary gospel music.

Contemporary interpretations of the vamp often omit the addition of new text, simply repeating a set lyric and melody over a repetitive and often jazz-influenced altered chord sequence. One of the most dynamic and effecting exponents of the contemporary vamp was gospel singer and composer Alex Bradford, as his 1971 recording of Dorsey's "It's a Highway To Heaven" clearly demonstrates (see Figure 6 and CD-A: Tr 2).

¹³³ Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 110.

Figure 6: Alex Bradford Vamp, “Highway to Heaven.”
CD-A: Tr. 2

Call & Response Section 1	Alex Bradford	I’m Walkin’
	<i>Backing Vocals</i>	<i>Walkin’ up the Kings highway</i>
	AB	Walkin’
	<i>BV</i>	<i>Walkin’ up the Kings highway</i>
	AB	Walkin’
	<i>BV</i>	<i>Walkin’ up the Kings highway</i>
	AB	Everyday
	<i>BV</i>	<i>Walkin’ up the Kings highway</i>
	AB	Every night
	<i>B V</i>	<i>Walkin’ up the Kings highway</i>
	AB	Walkin’
	<i>BV</i>	<i>Walkin’ up the Kings highway</i>
	AB	Through the storm
	<i>BV</i>	<i>Walkin’ up the Kings highway</i>
	AB	Through the rain
	<i>BV</i>	<i>Walkin’ up the Kings highway</i>
	AB	Through the storm
	<i>BV</i>	<i>Walkin’ up the Kings highway</i>
	AB	Through the rain
Vocal Tutti Section 2	AB & BV	Walkin’, talking, Singing, shouting (repeat)

Bradford alternates his vocal improvisations with the backing singers refrain, whilst the band accompaniment continues with a modified groove/feel,¹³⁴ slightly under the previous dynamic and intensity levels, so as to focus the attention on the new lyrics. The original chord sequence, commonly referred to by contemporary musicians as a “chord progression”¹³⁵ (see Figure 7) momentarily pauses, moving to a singular F major chord which underpins the backing vocals repeated lyric, “Walkin’ up the King’s highway” (see Figure 8, and refer also to Figure 6 : Section 1). Bradford inserts his vamp lyrics (Figure 6: Section 1) in between the backing vocal parts

¹³⁴ “Groove” and “feel” are phrases that contemporary musicians often use interchangeably, but they generally refer to the basic beat as defined by the drum and bass pattern, and how the beat is subdivided, including any simple repetitive or “riff” based rhythmic, counter-melodic or harmonic figures on other accompanying instruments.

¹³⁵ The term “chord progression” as used by contemporary jazz and pop musicians refers to the chord sequence from bar 1 through 16 (in this example), which is then repeated as required or specified. Improvised solos for example are usually played over a “chord progression,” (also referred to as “changes”), for as long as the soloist sustains his/her melodic invention.

indicated at Figure 8 (a) and Figure 8 (b), before the underpinning F major vamp chord moves to an F major to D minor progression for the final tutti vamp (see Figure 9, and refer also to Figure 6:Section 2).

Figure 7: Original Chord Progression, “Highway to Heaven.”

Figure 7 displays the original chord progression for the song "Highway to Heaven." The score is written for four staves in 4/4 time, featuring lyrics and chord symbols. The chords are: F, B^b, Bdim, F, F, C⁷, C⁷, F, F, Bdim, Bdim, F, F, F/A, B^b, F/C, C⁷, F, F/A, B^b, Bdim, F/C, C⁷.

Lyrics: High - way to hea - ven. None can walk up there but the pure in heart It's a high - way to hea - ven. Walk - in' up the Kings Highway. It's a

Figure 8: Vamp 1 Chord Progression, “Highway to Heaven.”¹³⁶

Figure 8 illustrates the Vamp 1 Chord Progression for "Highway to Heaven." The score is written for a single staff in 4/4 time, featuring lyrics and chord symbols. The chords are: F, F, F, F. The lyrics are: Walk-in' up the Kings' high - way. Walk-in' up the Kings' high - way. Two sections are highlighted with boxes and labeled (a) and (b).

¹³⁶ The Vamp 1 Chord Progression contains the backing vocal parts for the first part of the vamp, and illustrates how the new chord progression of sustained F major harmony continues to repeat until Bradford “cues” the next section (Bradford places his additional improvised sung lines in between the BV parts).

Figure 9: Vamp 2 Chord Progression, “Highway to Heaven.”¹³⁷



The listener is drawn into the anticipation of what couplet or lyric line Bradford will draw on or “invent” next and, coupled with the simple and repetitive chord progression, the vamp builds considerable tension until Bradford finally releases it by reprising the chorus. Bradford’s more contemporary employment of the vamp further personalises the song, enabling him to produce a musical expression that is unique to him and which contains a strong musical and cultural resonance for his audience. Furthermore, the Dorsey vamp becomes entrenched in contemporary gospel music performance practice in part as a result of Bradford’s charismatic and iconic performance style.

Choral Gospel Blues

The original idea for the “choral gospel blues” is ascribed to one of Dorsey’s significant contemporaries, gospel singer and composer Theodore Frye. Until the 1930s, choral singing in the northern African American old-line church had been performed by a traditional Western European-style choir in a relatively formal and decorous manner. However, this mode of worship could not accommodate the increased desire for responsive worship that had arisen in many congregations, swelled with migrants from the South.

¹³⁷ Chord Progression 3 illustrates the final vamp section where the chords alternate from F major to D minor, and again continue to repeat until cued or specified in the arrangement.

Evidently, like the slaves who felt the need to slip behind the tobacco barn in order “to talk wid Jesus” by hollering into a pot, recent migrants just as compulsively sought out the traditional collective religious experience to compensate for the passivity expected of them in old-line churches.¹³⁸

In the early 1920s, the minister of Bethel African American Methodist church, one of the oldest “old-line” churches, had organised an “indigenous chorus” to perform sacred music in the responsive, “down-home” style of the South for an upcoming revival service.¹³⁹ The success of this performance prompted the Metropolitan Community Church in Chicago to adopt a more organised approach to indigenous gospel singing some eight years later, and employed Magnolia Lewis Butts to form a gospel chorus in 1928. The “singing, praying and testifying”¹⁴⁰ style of the gospel chorus was initially only permitted outside the context of the ordinary Sunday morning service – usually relegated to special services and later, Friday nights – but its’ participatory and demonstrative style of worship engaged and united congregation, choir and soloist in a style of worship that was firmly rooted in the traditional South.

Dorsey’s music found a ready home with the new gospel chorus at Metropolitan Community Church in Chicago, which added a legitimacy to Dorsey’s music, and provided a ready made market into which he could sell his published compositions. Dorsey then established a gospel chorus at Ebenezer Baptist church in 1931, also in Chicago, where the minister, the Reverend Doctor J. H. L. Smith, became central to Dorsey’s developing career.¹⁴¹ Dorsey had originally teamed with preacher and singer the Reverend E. H. Hall in 1930, whose voice Dorsey claimed had the same quality as

¹³⁸ Harris, *The Rise Of Gospel Blues*, 187.

¹³⁹ Harris, *The Rise Of Gospel Blues*, 186.

¹⁴⁰ Harris, *The Rise Of Gospel Blues*, 188.

¹⁴¹ Harris, *The Rise Of Gospel Blues*, 192-193.

the Reverend W.M. Nix who had so dramatically affected him at the National Baptist convention in 1921. In 1931, Dorsey then teamed with urban evangelist Theodore Frye, part bluesman, part preacher. It was Frye who sang in “the old time way” at Ebenezer in 1932, giving dramatic expression to J. H. L. Smith’s vision for the place of indigenous worship in the church; and it was the gospel chorus who delivered this vision, along with Dorsey’s music and Frye’s unique voice and performance histrionics, to the world of African America. The gospel chorus, singing amongst other music Dorsey’s “gospels,” began to enjoy a prominence that the traditional choir had never experienced, to the point where Smith physically moved the choir from the balcony to behind the pulpit in direct line of sight of the congregation.¹⁴² The popularity of the chorus spread rapidly, although not without opposition, but with its growing popularity, Dorsey’s music also found a much wider audience. Harris perceptively highlights the importance of the bringing together of gospel blues and southern worship practices to the development of gospel music and to Dorsey’s prominence in general.

At Ebenezer, the October 1931 meeting between Smith, Frye, and Dorsey to organise the chorus represented the confluence of gospel blues and the movement to encourage indigenous singing in old-line churches. . . . Each [Smith, Frye and Dorsey] was a southerner who evolved into a professional role particularly reflective of the southern ethos. Smith and Frye were

¹⁴² The physical placement and movement of people, objects and fixtures within a Christian sacred building is ritualistically symbolic and value laden. The low literacy rates common in both laity and even some priests in the early Catholic Church produced a religious theology that placed the sacrament of the Mass as the pre-eminent sacrament, over the “word.” The interior design of a Catholic church, with the altar and cross prominently at the front and centre – the pulpit and lectern/prayer desk at the right and left hand side – not only reflects a philosophy but physically manifests it and acts as a constant reminder of it. The Puritan Reformation overturned this philosophy, placing the pulpit at the front and centre, therefore stating that the “word” was pre-eminent over the sacrament of the Mass. Given the history-changing and often violent effects of religious dialectics, Smith’s action in the re-positioning of the choir takes on a far greater significance.

southern preachers and Dorsey was a downhome bluesman. Each of their roles was altered, however, by its recontextualisation in Chicago.¹⁴³

I would go further than this, however, in that it is more than purely “ethos” that is reflected in the work of Smith, Frye and Dorsey. It is the deeply embedded cultural trace of the antebellum South and Africa itself that so directly affects every stratum of this community, that not only is it, to a degree, inescapable for Smith, Frye and Dorsey, it is recontextualised and indeed embodied by the very community that it informs and underpins. If indeed it can be maintained that “the African American community sings its theology” as Dr. Anthony Campbell asserted, then it is never more apparent than in the emergence and the music of the gospel choir.¹⁴⁴

Blues and Gospel Blues Form

The development of the “gospel blues” form, a compositional structural device as distinct from Dorsey’s solo or choral gospel blues, has become for gospel music what the 12 Bar Blues is to Blues, Rhythm & Blues and Rock & Roll.¹⁴⁵ The repetitive and strophic form structure of the stylised 12 bar blues was well known to Dorsey from his role as accompanist for blues singers and musicians like Ma Rainey and Tampa Red (Hudson Whittaker).

The cyclical blues could vary in length - depending on the lyric line, the emotional content and delivery by singer – but the pattern of AⁱAⁱⁱB, where Aⁱ states the key line,

¹⁴³ Harris, *The Rise Of Gospel Blues*, 199.

¹⁴⁴ Heilbut and Boyer both describe the early gospel choirs as a gospel “chorus,” and the tradition demonstrates that this designation distinguished the traditional, old-line choir from the new indigenous gospel chorus. However, Boyer also refers to the chorus as a “gospel choir” in key sections of *The Golden Age of Gospel* (page 32) illustrating the interchangeable nature of the terms and the favouring of the term “gospel choir” in contemporary reference.

¹⁴⁵ The “12 Bar Blues” structure is traditionally and iconically annotated using the numeric “12” by the vast majority of research. Similarly, the use of the ampersand for Rhythm & Blues/Rock & Roll is also iconic in the nomenclature, and both have been employed in this exegesis to reflect this.

repeated at Aⁱⁱ and responded to at B with a summation or concluding line is essential to the blues structure (Figure 10), forming the “call and response” component of blues, drawing on the practice of responsorial singing from Africa. The Tampa Red composition “Turpentine Blues”¹⁴⁶ (Figure 11), first recorded in 1932 for Vocalion,¹⁴⁷ uses the 12-Bar Blues structure and is illustrative of how beautifully blues can encapsulate story-telling, history, and social commentary in a communicative style that is both immediate and direct.

Figure 10: Blues Structure, “Turpentine Blues.”

I ain’t gonna work no more, I tell you the reason why

[rhyme – Aⁱ; musical time – four bars]

I ain’t gonna work no more, I tell you the reason why

[rhyme – Aⁱⁱ; musical time – four bars]

because everyone wants to sell and nobody wants to buy

[rhyme – B; musical time – four bars]

¹⁴⁶ Turpentine manufacture was the largest industry in North Carolina and the most important industry in the South in general up until the 1930s. The manufacturing process had not changed in over two hundred years, producing one of the most hazardous and lowly paid forms of employment carried out by mostly African Americans. The life expectancy of these workers was poor, as the refining process produced fumes that when inhaled over a period of time or digested would cause respiratory illness and heart failure.

¹⁴⁷ The Vocalion record label, founded in 1916 by the Aeolian Piano Company in New York, published recordings some notable musicians including Louis Armstrong and Bix Biederbecke.

Figure 11: Tampa Red, “Turpentine Blues.”¹⁴⁸

Tampa Red

Tur-pen-tine busi- ness ain't_ what it used_ to be

5 Turpen-tine busi- ness ain't_ what it used_ to be

9 can't make e-nough mon-ey now to ev-ven get on a spree

Refrain

I ain't gonna work no more, I tell you the reason why
 I ain't gonna work no more, I tell you the reason why
 because everyone wants to sell and nobody wants to buy

Verse 2

You can work in the field, you can work in the sawmill too
 You can work in the field, you can work in the sawmill too
 But you can't make no money at anything you try to do

The early placement of the I chord (F#) in bar two, rather than at the beginning of bar three (similarly placed early in bars six and ten) is typical of the structural variation regularly employed in blues, although here, the overall number of bars remains at twelve.¹⁴⁹ Whittaker also uses a refrain in this blues, which contains the central message of the song, and acquires greater importance and impact within the overall structure as a result of repetition.

¹⁴⁸ Transcribed from a re-issue of the original recording by the author.

¹⁴⁹ The stylised 12 bar blues structure would place the I chord in bars 1 – 4, the IV chord in bars 5 – 6, the I chord bars 7 – 8, the V chord bar 9, IV chord bar 10, I chord bar 11 and the V chord in bar 12 to act as the “turn around” chord that leads to the repeat of the form.

“Gospel blues” form varies from the 12 bar blues by using a four-line prose structure (AⁱAⁱⁱBAⁱⁱⁱ) over sixteen bars, containing lyrics that describe a spiritual hope as the answer to life’s constant vicissitudes as Dorsey’s composition “The Lord Will Make A Way” (Figure12) clearly illustrates.

Figure 12: Gospel Blues Structure, “The Lord Will Make A Way.”¹⁵⁰

I know the Lord will make a way, oh yes, he will.

[rhyme–Aⁱ; musical time–four bars]

I know the Lord will make a way, oh yes, he will.

[rhyme–Aⁱⁱ; musical time–four bars]

He will make a way for you He will lead you safely through

[rhyme–B; musical time–four bars]

I know the Lord will make a way, oh yes, he will.

[rhyme–Aⁱⁱⁱ; musical time–four bars]

Duality in the African American Community.

The nature of the development of gospel blues, style and structure, goes further than purely musical analysis can describe, however. Harris draws our attention to the importance and complexity of the social, religious and economic environment that gave rise to it.

To focus on Dorsey as a leader of the gospel blues movement surely illuminates certain elements of the evolution of that song style. But to do so excessively overshadows aspects of his life that lead to a deep understanding of the social milieu out of which gospel blues evolved. This is even truer in

¹⁵⁰ Originally quoted by Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 70.

Dorsey's case since he personifies – almost uniquely so – the thought and social forces that forged the culture in which this music was shaped.¹⁵¹

Furthermore, Harris describes the duality within the African American community between assimilationist and indigenous value systems,¹⁵² and how Dorsey was often somewhat uneasily situated between the two. His study is illuminatingly comprehensive and gives particular insight into the “twoness”¹⁵³ of African American life. He describes the rise of gospel blues as a “socio-cultural phenomenon” that occurs within a cultural debate over the issue of worship styles.¹⁵⁴ Harris quotes Daniel Alexander Payne, sixth Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, where Payne recalls attending a “bush meeting” (an indigenous, southern-style worship service) where ring shouts, hand clapping and foot stamping were used in a “most ridiculous and heathenish way.”

I requested the pastor to go and stop their dancing. . . . To the most thoughtful and intelligent I usually succeeded in making the “Band”

¹⁵¹ Harris, *The Rise Of Gospel Blues*, xix.

¹⁵² Sections of the mostly northern African American community held the view that the best way to achieve a greater and desired assimilation into mainstream, white-America was to shed themselves of what they considered a “primitive” ethnic heritage – including southern traditional religious rituals such as shouting, clapping, overt physical and verbal emotionalism etc - and to adopt more conservative and established European religious and social practises. The significant demographic shift resulting from the Great Migration, coupled with the growth of the Holiness movement and the revival at Azusa Street in Las Angeles, transported much of the traditional southern religious ideology and practice into the northern context, resulting in a period of significant religious turmoil within the African American community.

¹⁵³ Du Bois: *The Souls of Black Folk*, 3.

¹⁵⁴ The socio-religious debate at this time was particularly significant and encompassed all sections of the Christian religious community in some manner. Not only were the “old-line” African American churches in the North struggling to come to terms with the emergence of the religious and social practices from the South, the wider Methodist Episcopal Church was struggling to reconcile the new teachings of their own breakaway “Holiness” movement (see Figures 3 and 4). As the African American church community did, (and does) indeed “sing its theology,” the nature of this intense dialectic is extreme, life-affecting and articulately and passionately expressed through their sacred music.

disgusting; but by the ignorant masses, as in the case mentioned, it was regarded as the essence of religion.¹⁵⁵

Payne's writing gives a clear indication of the intensity and reach that the clash and divide of southern and northern African American culture and theology – to a degree, one and the same thing – was causing and that as a community they were struggling to come to terms with.

There were blacks who, in clinging to Afro-American folkways, expressed their allegiance to the self contained culture of their slave ancestors... there were other blacks who found indigenous black culture an impediment to the assimilation of Afro-Americans into the mainstream culture....What is unique about Afro American history and of significance to a deep understanding of the shaping of post-Emancipation black American culture is that this clash occurred in a church setting and that it was provoked by a church leader in reaction to an established church ritual.¹⁵⁶

The significance that all the major research attributes to Dorsey's move "back to the church" underlines the importance of the African American church in the development of African American culture and the significant cultural trace that defines it.

Although Dorsey's contribution to gospel music is immense, his music, like his life, was shaped by personal struggle and hardship, a great deal of which arose from within the church in its initial and fervent rejection of his music and ultimately, Dorsey himself. Bernice Johnson Reagon comments; "What torture it must have been to have

¹⁵⁵ Daniel E. Payne, *History Of The African Methodist Episcopal Church*, ed. C.S. Smith (New York: Johnson, 1968), 253-254.

¹⁵⁶ Harris, *The Rise of Gospel Blues*, 3-4.

the music of both the church and the street resonating from within one's soul!"¹⁵⁷

However, Boyer places this in a broader context, stating:

The full magnitude of the contributions of Thomas Andrew Dorsey to gospel music, an art form of which he has been called the father, may only now begin to be realized. As a composer, pianist, organizer, and conductor of choirs, he must be ranked with the most notable innovators of twentieth-century music.¹⁵⁸

Thomas Dorsey and the Spread of Gospel Music.

The importance of the National Baptist Convention and their publication "Gospel Pearls" (1921) to the spread of gospel music, and ultimately to Dorsey's increasing and significant musical influence, should not be underestimated. "Gospel Pearls" was the first African American publication to use the term "gospel" to describe both a style of music and a style of singing – as distinct from the scriptural usage of the term "gospel," relating specifically the New Testament of the Bible – and contained several songs by Tindley including "We'll Understand It Better By And By" and Dorsey's first published work, "If I Don't Get There". Gospel Pearls presented "written" gospel music in a manner that was acceptable to the more conservative old-line churches, removing from the music the context in which the "excesses" associated with the Holiness-Pentecostal¹⁵⁹ churches – such as singing in extreme registers and dynamic levels, shouting and handclapping – were not prescribed or necessary. Boyer adds that the songs in "Gospel Pearls" relied more on the nineteenth-century Baptist lining-hymn tradition of "singing songs in a slow tempo and elaborating each syllable

¹⁵⁷ Reagon, *If You Go Don't Hinder Me*, 22.

¹⁵⁸ Boyer, *We'll Understand It Better By And By*, ed. Bernice Johnson Reagon, 142.

¹⁵⁹ Refer to Figure 2 and Figure 3.

with three to five embellishment tones.”¹⁶⁰ Dorsey’s music could now be performed either as written, in a more conservative hymn-like manner, or with as many added blue notes, rhythmic and melodic embellishments, body movements and congregational interjections as any one individual church tradition desired. As a result, “Gospel Pearls” became the acceptable and prescribed hymnal found in the majority of African American churches, which greatly increased the dissemination of gospel music – and Dorsey’s compositions in particular – throughout the greater part of African America.

Lucie Eddie Campbell, the first female composer of gospel hymns, also played a significant role in Dorsey’s life. Appointed in 1919 as the music director for the National Baptist Convention,¹⁶¹ she was part of the committee who selected compositions for Gospel Pearls and as music director for the convention, she was able to exert tremendous influence over the style of music presented. “... Campbell was so important and powerful in the National Baptist Convention that anyone who wanted to sing on the program had to audition for her, singing the same song he or she planned to sing on the program.”¹⁶² Campbell gave her significant support and endorsement to Dorsey, and through the National Baptist Convention gave his music considerable and widespread exposure.

¹⁶⁰ Boyer, *The Golden Age of Gospel*, 42.

¹⁶¹ The Reverend E. C. Morris was elected as the first president of the founding National Baptist Convention in 1895 after a merger between the Baptist Mission Convention (1880) and the North-western Baptist and Southern Baptist Conventions. The Early African Americans churches were not permitted to form conventions or associations, and yet its influence by 1930 over theology and religious practice was extensive if for no other reason than it was, and remains, the largest of the African American religious conventions.

¹⁶² Boyer, *We’ll Understand It Better By And By*, ed. Reagon, 82-83.

Finally, Dorsey established the first publishing company designed exclusively for African American gospel composers, and was also instrumental in the formation of one of the first gospel choirs at the Pilgrim Baptist church in Chicago in 1932. The Pilgrim gospel choir included at this time a number of singers and musicians who would later rise to prominence in their own right (including a young Roberta Martin), and Dorsey, along with Sallie Martin, Magnolia Lewis Butts, Theodore R. Frye and Beatrice Brown, founded and eventually presided over the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses (NCGCC). Dorsey's music and influence firmly established gospel music and the mass gospel chorus as a nationwide institution, and within a short period, the NCGCC, under Dorsey's presidency and like the National Baptist Convention, becomes the most expansive and influential "church" of the new gospel music, and one of the most significant agents for the continued recontextualisation and strengthening of the deeply embedded cultural trace.

Dorsey's lyrics and music speak to the whole African American community. Both text and music are laden with coded language, nuance and gesture, the full meaning of which is not immediately or fully accessible to those outside this culture. It is the values and traditions of the African American community that both informs and sustains Dorsey and his gospel music, and it is Dorsey's music that in turn continues to be one of the most influential, unifying and defining forces for that same African American community.

The gospel of Tindley and Dorsey talk directly to the poor. In so many words, its about rising above poverty while living humble, deserting the ways of the world while retaining its best tunes.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Heilbut, *The Gospel Sound*, 28.

Just as the blues-man recontextualised the spiritual, Dorsey re-invented the blues – in and for the church. Harris supports this in quoting blues and jazz pianist Willie “the Lion” Smith; “Our soft, slow, four-o-clock-in-the-morning music got to those folks from the South.... by this time we had learned to play the natural twelve-bar blues that evolved from the spirituals.”¹⁶⁴

Dorsey is both “gospel” and blues-man. His music is both of the street and the church. His life is one of despair and hope; and he lives within a defining and pervasive culture of duality or “twoness.”

If there is a cause-effect factor in this tripartite symbiosis of (1) secular and sacred, (2) lower class and middle class, and (3) rural Southern and urban Northern, it has to be the notion of duality and its pervasiveness not just in Dorsey’s life but in African American culture and religion. The similarities among exposure, conflict, and resolution between Dorsey’s life and the church and the culture are traceable to the twoness that is central to the African American experience.¹⁶⁵

From spirituals to blues to gospel, Dorsey stands in the direct line of accession, a catalyst for the recontextualisation and transformation of the deeply embedded cultural trace of Africa America. He is indeed unique in the manner in which he is able to draw on the “whole” of African American sacred and secular life, music, and tradition. Across sacred and secular, gospel and blues, and the duality of African American existence, Dorsey brings a voice of unity born not so much of his determination and talent, which are considerable and self evident, but of the totality of

¹⁶⁴ Heilbut, *The Gospel Sound*, 1992, 61

¹⁶⁵ Michael W. Harris, *We’ll Understand It Better By And By*, ed. Bernice Johnson Reagon, 182.

his life, which in turn was born, nurtured and sustained by the very community that his music was to help define.

Marked by catchy titles, many of which became part of the religious rhetoric of African American Christians, [Dorsey's] songs had simple but beautiful melodies, harmonies that did not overshadow the text, and open rhythmic spaces for the obligatory improvisation that identified gospel. Indeed, during the 1940s there were periods when all gospel songs were referred to as "Dorsey."¹⁶⁶

The music of Thomas Andrew Dorsey, whether by design or through performance practice and reinterpretation, transitioned African American sacred music from the traditions of the antebellum spiritual and the gospel hymns of Charles Tindley, into the new gospel music. Dorsey's musical legacy, birthed in and nurtured by the deeply embedded cultural trace of African America, would become the foundation and definition for not only gospel music, but for the juggernaut that would become contemporary popular music and culture throughout the remainder of the twentieth century.

¹⁶⁶ Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 61.

CHAPTER 2

The Voice of Gospel Music

Gospel music was and is sung theology, philosophy and life experience. It draws on the past, recontextualising old truths into the present so as to look to the future, and, although the influence of Western religious practice and theology in its evolution is not insignificant, it is overridingly and indefatigably African American. Pearl Williams-Jones states that the “consistent and persistent retention in gospel music performance and practice of a clearly defined black identity growing out of the black experience in America is indicative of the indomitability of the African ethos.”¹⁶⁷

Black gospel music, a synthesis of West African and Afro-American music, dance, poetry and drama, is a body of urban contemporary black religious music of rural folk origins which is a celebration of the Christian experience of salvation and hope. It is at the same time a declaration of black selfhood which is expressed through the very personal medium of music. . . . While the influences of Western religious concepts and music upon black religious music are indisputable and have been factually documented through musicological and historical analysis, the overriding dominance of the Africanization of these Western influences is equally indisputable.¹⁶⁸

By 1945, gospel music had begun to make a significant impact on and contribution to the canon of sacred music within the African American church and broader community, and within this developing tradition the unique characteristics of the vocal style of the gospel singers significantly impacted the development of the genre.

¹⁶⁷ Williams-Jones, “Afro-American Gospel Music: A Crystallization of the Black Aesthetic,” 373.

¹⁶⁸ Williams-Jones, “Afro-American Gospel Music: A Crystallization of the Black Aesthetic,” 376.

Gospel singing is distinctive for its treatment of four elements of the music: timbre, range, text interpolation, and improvisation, both melodic and rhythmic. Although such practices are also characteristic of other Afro-American traditional vocal styles – i.e., blues, jazz, spirituals, soul, and folk – there is a special earthiness, or more particularly, a retained “primitive” feature in the way these elements are handled in the gospel style that differs drastically from the Western European aesthetic.¹⁶⁹

Although the African “ethos” to which Williams-Jones refers is more fundamental and far reaching than the term initially suggests, with Boyer’s reference to the retained “primitive” features of African musical aesthetic, they both clearly indicate the existence and significance of the deeply embedded African American cultural trace that is in part manifest in the compositional style and prose of composers like Tindley and Dorsey, but just as importantly in the defining performance practices of the gospel singers. Bernice Johnson Reagon states concisely that “Gospel is both a repertoire and a style of singing,”¹⁷⁰ again underlining the dynamic inter-relationship between gospel music and the performance practices of the gospel singing style and reinforcing the notion that the way gospel music is performed, musically and physically, is as important to the development of the gospel style as the gospel song is itself.

¹⁶⁹ Boyer, “Contemporary Gospel Music,” 23.

¹⁷⁰ Reagon, *We’ll Understand It Better By And By*, 5.

The Gospel Singer

The harmonies were as simple as those of a hymn or the blues, but gospel's rhythm, always personalized by singers into the accents and cross-pulses of their speech, walk, and laughter, was intricate and complex So great were these practices that by the mid-1940s they defined gospel style."¹⁷¹

Although a competent singer himself, Thomas Dorsey chose to team with several gifted and unique gospel singers including Sallie Martin and Theodore Frye, clearly illustrating the importance that Dorsey himself attached to the gospel singing style of these artists and their ability to capture most effectively and give voice to his music. In addition to the composed lyric, the gospel singer would employ a variety of techniques and extended vocal improvisations enabling them to communicate personal feelings and reflections on their own life circumstances, resonant with those in the community around them. The gospel singer would use his/her vocal virtuosity to engage and emotionally affect their audience – Theodore Frye for example was considered to be a singer who could “move a house,” meaning that he was able to utilize an array of vocal techniques that could and would elicit a vocal, physical and/or emotional response from his audience. However, if the gospel singing style is one of the most significant defining factors of aesthetic and stylistic effectiveness in performance practice of this medium, the actual notated music gives little or no indication of these expectations in performance style. In 1975, Pearl Williams-Jones identified six definable African American gospel vocal techniques that she extrapolated from performances by gospel singer James Cleveland.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 49-50.

¹⁷² Williams-Jones, “Afro-American Gospel Music: A Crystallization of the Black Aesthetic,” 377.

1. Moans
2. Grunts
3. Wails
4. Shouts
5. Gliding Pitches
6. Song Speech

In 1979 Horace Boyer further identified eight key gospel singing techniques,¹⁷³ the first five of which he extrapolated from a performance by the Ward Singers' Clara Ward and Marion Williams, in their seminal 1949 recording of the W.H. Brewster gospel song, "Surely God is Able."¹⁷⁴ Boyer later identified three additional gospel vocal techniques that specifically related to the performances of Ward and Williams on the original recording.¹⁷⁵

1. Vocal timbre
2. "Gospel" Vibrato
3. Melodic ornamentation
 - a. Ascending and descending passing tones
 - b. The bend
 - c. Upper and lower neighbour tones
 - d. The grupetto
 - e. The portamento
4. Rhythmic improvisation
5. Textual interpolation (expansion and personalisation)
6. Simultaneous improvisation

¹⁷³ Boyer, "Contemporary Gospel Music," 28-30.

¹⁷⁴ Brewster had originally named his song *Our God Is Able*, but as illustration of the strong connection between composition and performance practice, Ward's emphasis of the word "surely," in addition to the song's great popularity, prompted Brewster to re-publish the song under the title "Surely God Is Able."

¹⁷⁵ Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 107-110.

7. Development of the “high who” between choruses/sections¹⁷⁶
8. Rhyming or “wandering” couplets/quatrains

However, Williams-Jones’ research does not attempt to musically analyse or describe the precise nature of these techniques, and although Boyer’s research is more comprehensive in this regard, it becomes necessary, for the purposes of further analytical comparison, for the precise musical nature of these descriptors be clearly analysed, defined and notated. The following table (Table 4) and subsequent analytical definitions therefore build on and extend the previous research of Williams-Jones and Boyer, providing a comprehensive list of essential gospel vocal techniques that are, to a significant degree, definitive of African American gospel music.

¹⁷⁶ The “high who” is a long, sustained high note sung by a gospel singer that usually links the end of one section, often a chorus, with another. The consonant “wh” is placed at the beginning of an “oo” vowel sound for rhythmic emphasis.

Table 4: Gospel Singing Techniques

1. The Gospel Moan
2. Timbre
 - a. Gravel and Grunts
 - b. Screams and Shouts
 - c. Song Speech and Vibrato
 - d. Timbre/Register Shifts
3. Pitch
 - a. Slides, Glides, Wails and the High Who
 - b. Blues Inflection
 - c. Passing Tones, Bends, Neighbour Tones and Grupettos
4. Rhythm
 - a. Gospel Phrasing
 - b. Repetition, Emphasis and Rhythmic Singing
 - c. Syncopation, Elongation and Truncation
5. Lyrics
 - a. Elongated Consonants
 - b. Interjections and Textual Interpolation
6. Structures In Gospel Music, Improvisation and Accompaniment.
 - a. The Immediate Reprise and the Praise Break
 - b. Improvisation in gospel music
 - c. Gospel Accompaniment

The Gospel Moan

Eileen Southern¹⁷⁷ quotes Paul Svin'in, a Russian traveller and visitor to Bethel church in 1811, who described one of the musical practices he observed as an “agonizing, heart-rending moaning.” In the broadest terms, moaning is a basic human vocalised response that occurs in various forms throughout most world cultures. Specifically to African American gospel however, the gospel moan may use a simple text or no discernable text at all but is nevertheless laden with emotion and meaning, containing a resonance that is far more than purely physical sound. Its expressive quality is multifaceted, dependent on context and performer, ranging from a closed mouth sound resonating through the nasal passage to an open-throated cry from the heart; from the reassurance in the “mothers tone,”¹⁷⁸ to the cry for redemption from pain and suffering, “mourning” the loss of humanities inalienable right to life, self-determination and freedom. Some of the earliest examples of the “moan” can be heard in the *Spirituals and Work Songs* field recordings, held by the Archive of Folk Song within the Library of Congress, and one of these recordings, “Aint No More Cane”¹⁷⁹ clearly illustrates an open-vowel moan, punctuating the verse lines with the sound “Oh–o” (see Figure 13 and CD-E: Tr. 1. Refer also to the Glossary: “Gospel Nomenclature” for definitions of all additional analytical/graphical notations and markings).

¹⁷⁷ Southern, *The Music Of Black Americans*, 79.

¹⁷⁸ I have used the phrase “mothers tone” to represent the primordial, reassuring, under-the-breath resonance that is traditionally associated with the comforting sounds mothers use in early communicative singing to their new born children.

¹⁷⁹ *Afro-American Spirituals, Work Songs, And Ballads*, The Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Culture ed. Alan Lomax, Rounder Records CD 1510, 1998.

Figure 13: Moan A – Ernest Williams, “Ain’t No More Cane.”

CD-E: Tr. 1



Mahalia Jackson employs a simple moan in her recording “The Upper Room,” illustrated here in bar 3 of Figure 14 (see also CD-E: Tr. 2 and Tr. 3).¹⁸⁰ This moan bears the emotion of the “mothers tone” – a characteristic of Jackson’s performances – a positive and reassuring sound, that also functions in this song as a punctuation point separating the *colla voce* opening from the metered tempo section that follows Figure 14, and later the reiteration of the refrain (Figure 15).

Figure 14: Moan B – Mahalia Jackson, “The Upper Room.”

CD-E: Tr. 2



Figure 15: Moan C – Mahalia Jackson, “The Upper Room.”

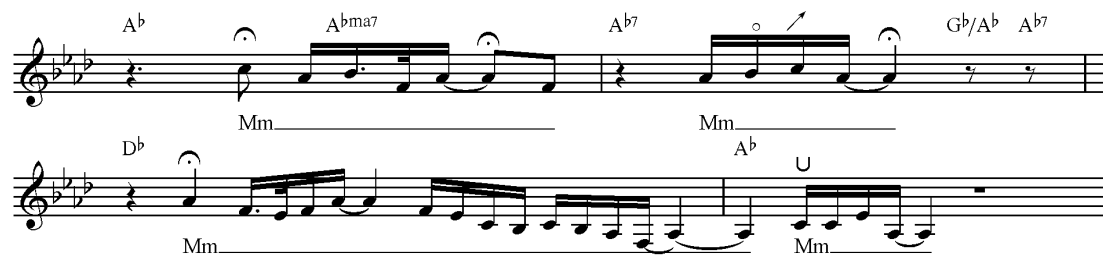
CD-E: Tr. 2



¹⁸⁰ Mahalia Jackson, *Gospels & Spirituals*, Retro Music, R2CD.40-39/1

Aretha Franklin employs this same closed-mouth technique over an extended phrase length, in the opening of “Amazing Grace,” recorded in 1972 with James Cleveland (Figure 16 & CD-E: Tr. 4).

Figure 16: Moan D – Aretha Franklin, “Amazing Grace.”
CD-E: Tr. 4



The moan can also take the form of an open mouth “cry from the heart,” revealing a deep rooted sense of pain and suffering. Bars five through eight of Figure 17 (also CD-E: Tr. 5) illustrate a moan contained within a simple repetitive refrain “Oh Lord trouble so hard, Oh Lordy, trouble so hard,” that conveys a more powerful emotion than the text might initially suggest. This early recording was made in 1933 but reflects a practice that is considerably older, dating back to the earliest period of slavery; the cry to “the Lord” is for redemption from their considerable suffering.

Figure 17: Moan E – Dora Reed, Henry Reed and Vera Hall, “Trouble So Hard.”
CD-E: Tr. 5



Craig Werner supports this in attributing the “deep gospel moan” produced by soul singer Tina Turner at the beginning of her 1969/1970 recording of “A Fool in Love” to Turner’s troubled life.

Almost every female singer of the early sixties had, at the very least, suffered through a series of difficult romantic relationships. Tina Turner accepted Ike [Turner’s mistreatment] in part because she preferred them to life in the cotton fields where she had grown up. . . . Ike may have provided an alternative to Nutbush, Tennessee, where Tina grew up as Anna Mae Bullock, but the price of the ticket was high. You can hear it in Tina’s voice on “A Fool in Love”.¹⁸¹

Turner’s Rhythm & Blues/Soul singing is steeped in the gospel tradition, and the moan, whilst more aggressive, is still clearly present as Figure 18 illustrates (CD-E: Tr. 6).

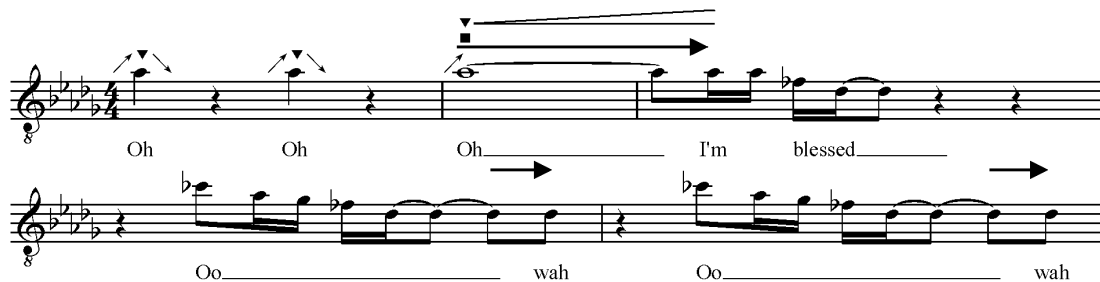
¹⁸¹ Werner, *A Change Is Gonna Come*, 38.

Figure 18: Moan F – Tina Turner, “A Fool In Love.”
CD-E: Tr. 6



The moan is still used in contemporary gospel, predominantly adhering to the more aggressive approach evident in the Turner example. “I’m Blessed” (Figure 19 and CD-E: Tr. 7) was recorded in 1996 by the National Baptist Convention Mass Choir and the featured soloist, Paul Porter, uses the moan as part of his *colla voce* introduction.

Figure 19: Moan G – Paul Porter, “I’m Blessed.”
CD-E: Tr. 7



Finally, gospel artist Fred Hammond takes the feeling of the traditional moan and places it in a contemporary gospel context (Figure 20 and CD-E: Tr. 8), writing it into

the vocal ensemble parts as well as his own soaring, quasi-improvised solo line, fusing African American gospel with elements of contemporary popular music.¹⁸²

¹⁸²The notion of combining musical elements from seemingly diverse contemporary genres has become one of the more fascinating developments in gospel music and will be examined later in this exegesis. It is interesting to note that the use of non-textual sounds and utterances in contemporary popular music (Oh, whoa, oo, ah) on which Hammond is also drawing, are in fact derivative of the African American gospel singing style.

Figure 20: Moan H – Fred Hammond, “My Heart Is For You.”
CD-E: Tr. 8

The musical score is written for four voices: Lead Voice, Soprano, Alto, and Tenor. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 12/8. The score is divided into three systems, each starting with a measure number (1, 4, and 7) in the top left corner.

System 1 (Measures 1-3):

- Lead Voice:** Starts with a whole rest, then sings "Whoa" on a long note.
- Soprano:** Sings "Whoa" on a long note, then "Oh whoa" on a shorter note.
- Alto:** Sings "Whoa" on a long note, then "Oh whoa" on a shorter note.
- Tenor:** Sings "whoa" on a long note.

System 2 (Measures 4-6):

- Lead Voice:** Sings "oh" on a long note, then "Whoa" on a shorter note.
- Soprano:** Sings "oh" on a long note, then "Oh" on a shorter note, followed by "oo oh" on a shorter note.
- Alto:** Sings "Oh" on a long note, then "oh" on a shorter note, followed by "Oh" on a shorter note, and "oo oh" on a shorter note.
- Tenor:** Sings "Oh" on a long note, then "oh" on a shorter note, followed by "oh" on a shorter note, and "Whoa" on a shorter note.

System 3 (Measures 7-9):

- Lead Voice:** Sings "Now!" on a long note, then "we come" on a shorter note.
- Soprano:** Sings "oh" on a long note, then "oh oh" on a shorter note, followed by "Now" on a shorter note.
- Alto:** Sings "oh" on a long note, then "oh oh" on a shorter note, followed by "Now" on a shorter note.
- Tenor:** Sings "oh" on a long note, then "oh oh" on a shorter note, followed by "Now" on a shorter note.

Craig Werner states that; “The gospel singer testifies to the burden and the power of the spirit in moans or screams or harmonies so sweet they make you cry.”¹⁸³ The moan therefore is an articulate expression of a deep, communal understanding and acknowledgement of a history of persecution, suffering, and perseverance under trial, that transcends the written – or sung – word.

[Aretha Franklin] does with her voice what a preacher does with his when he *moans* to a congregation. That moan strikes a responsive chord in the congregation and somebody answers you back with their own moan, which means I know what you’re moaning about because I feel the same way. So you have something sort of like a thread spinning out and touching and tying [*sic*] everybody together in a shared experience just like getting happy and shouting together in church.¹⁸⁴

Timbre

Gravel and Grunts.

In most traditional [African and African American] singing there is no apparent striving for the “smooth” and “sweet” qualities that are so highly regarded in Western tradition. Some outstanding blues, gospel, and jazz singers have voices that may be described as foggy, hoarse, rough or sandy. Not only is this kind of voice not derogated, it often seems to be valued. Sermons preached in this type of voice appear to create a special emotional tension.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Werner, *A Change Is Gonna Come*, 30.

¹⁸⁴ Charles L. Sanders, “A Close-up Look at Sister Superstar,” *Ebony* (December 1971): 126-127.

¹⁸⁵ Harold Courlander, *Negro Folk Music* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 23.

The tonal characteristics of the “gospel voice” are as rich and as varied as the number of gospel singers. The “gravel” in the voice (alternatively referred to as “rasp” “grit” or “hoarseness”) used by many singers – a result of the complex interaction of overtones and harmonics produced under vocal stress similar to shouting – is a commonly applied general vocal characteristic that also functions as a means of creating an impassioned emphasis to a word or phrase. Blind Willie Johnson’s performance of “Church I’m Saved Today” (CD-E: Tr. 9) illustrates a gravel based vocal timbre that remains constant throughout the performance. However, on “Let Your Lighthouse Shine On Me” (CD-E: Tr. 10) Johnson sings the first half of the song with an almost lyric tenor-tone, only adding gravel at the beginning of the new verse “I know I got religion and I ain’t ashamed,” adding an intensity and passion to this new and more personal text. Gravel is also used by female singers as evidenced by Sister Mary Nelson throughout much of her recording of “The Royal Telephone,” (CD-E: Tr. 11), and Bessie Smith in “Moan You Mourners” (CD-E: Tr. 12) who regularly makes use of gravel for emphasis (“washed white,” “fiery furnace,” “moan you moaners”). Kirvy Brown, soloist with the Love Fellowship Tabernacle Choir under the directorship of Hezekiah Walker, illustrates this technique in a contemporary gospel song, “Lord Do It”. She begins with a more open, purer tone, building intensity with the gravel tone on key lyrics (Figure 21 and CD-E: Tr. 13), to a final climactic and dramatic conclusion to the verse in full voice gravel that becomes an imploring scream (Figure 22 and CD-E: Tr. 13).

Figure 21: Gravel A – Kirvy Brown, “Lord Do It.”

CD-E: Tr. 13



Figure 22: Gravel B – Kirvy Brown, “Lord Do It.”

CD-E: Tr. 13



Fred Hammond also employs this technique in an “impromptu” medley of traditional African American gospel tunes on his live DVD *Speak Those Things: POL Chapter 3* (CD-E: Tr 14). Within the context of a contemporary gospel concert (Chicago, 2003), Hammond switches from a lyric tenor, “pop” oriented vocal style to a gravel-toned emphatic vocal style reminiscent of the gospel singers of the past (Figure 23), particularly with the phrase “Let me see you clap your hands, stand up on your day” (Figure 24). Hammond uses the gravel tone to add a significant emphasis to both the text and his choice of song,¹⁸⁶ underlining the strong connection to his gospel heritage and the practice of “moving the house,” and engaging the community (audience) in the performance itself.

¹⁸⁶ The song “God Is A Good God” is Hammonds re-working of a traditional spiritual that was popularised by the African American Pentecostal movement of the 1930s.

Figure 23: Gravel C – Fred Hammond, “God Is A Good God.”
CD-E: Tr 14

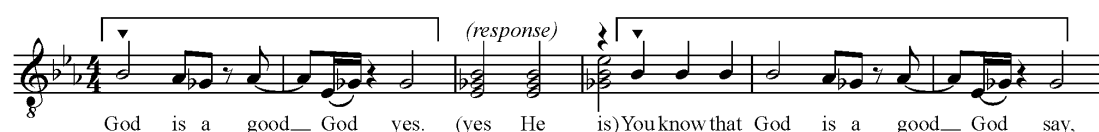
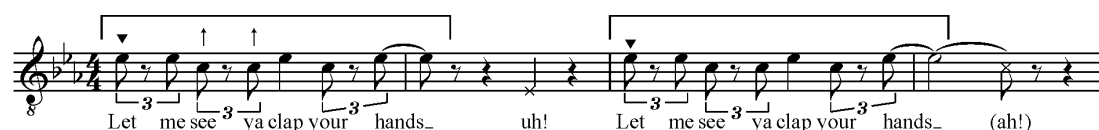


Figure 24: Gravel D – Fred Hammond, “God Is A Good God.”
CD-E: Tr 14



Within this same example, we can also observe the use of the “grunt,” which occurs after the lines “let me see you clap your hands” in bars two and four. The grunt derives from the rhythmic and percussive sounds made by the work tools of the slaves and is a vital constituent of the performance practice of the traditional work song dating back to the earliest period of slavery. Wayne D. Shirley writes in the CD liner notes of *Afro-American Spirituals, Work Songs, And Ballads*; “The rhythmic grunts on this record indicate the work blows of the pick or axe.”¹⁸⁷ The Arkansas recorded version of “Jumpin’ Judy” (CD-E: Tr. 15) for example, illustrates a constant drum-like pulse underlying the work song, whilst the Mississippi version of this tune (CD-E: Tr. 16) includes a wider-spaced, more punctuating percussive “grunt” that Shirley refers to above. In its gospel context, the grunt occurs less frequently and is usually a loud, short expulsion of air on a non-specified pitch which punctuates sentences and

¹⁸⁷ *Afro-American Spirituals, Work Songs, And Ballads*, The Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Culture, Rounder Records, CD 1510, 1998.

phrases, underlining the pulse or beat within the phrase (Figure 24 bars two and four). Dorothy Love Coates uses a simple and softly uttered grunt in the song “Trouble” that finishes the opening phrase “Oh Lord you know I’m in trouble” (Figure 25 and CD-E: Tr. 17) and also at the end of the first line of the second verse “I get so tired of being persecuted Lord” (Figure 26 and CD-E: Tr. 18), revealing in both cases a recognition of a life-long burden of great hurt.

Figure 25: Grunt A – Dorothy Love Coates, “Trouble.”

CD-E: Tr. 17



Figure 26: Grunt B – Dorothy Love Coates, “Trouble.”

CD-E: Tr. 18



Finally, Kirk Franklin also employs this technique in the introduction to “Jesus Is The Reason” (Figure 27 and CD-E: Tr. 19), placing the grunt on a strong but syncopated off-beat, emphasising the “skip-shuffle” feel of this contemporary hip hop-inspired gospel song.¹⁸⁸ The synthesiser melody has been included with the vocal part for positional reference.

¹⁸⁸ The term skip-shuffle applies to the triplet sub-division of the eighth note rather than the quarter note. Refer also to Appendix 1).

Figure 27: Grunt C – Kirk Franklin, “Jesus Is The Reason.”

CD-E: Tr. 19

The musical score for Figure 27 consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a synthesizer line (bass clef). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line includes triplet markings (three '3's in boxes) and lyrics. The synthesizer line provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Put your hands to - geth - er come on Uh! good God You got - ta ask some-bo - dy Uh! say! come on Uh! good God."

Screams and Shouts

The “scream” in gospel is an expression of exuberant joy, emphatic acclamation or declaration. Clarence Fountain demonstrates a simple scream in his solo with the Five Blind Boys of Alabama (CD-E: Tr. 20) in their 1966/67 recording, “Something’s Got A Hold Of Me” (Figure 28).

Figure 28: Scream A – Clarence Fountain, “Something’s Got A Hold Of Me.”

CD-E: Tr. 20

The musical score for Figure 28 shows a single vocal line (treble clef) in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are "Wan - na let you know— Hey!". The melody is simple, and the "Hey!" is marked with a square note head and a downward-pointing arrow, indicating a specific vocal technique or "scream".

Whilst the terms scream and shout are to some degree interchangeable, the shout¹⁹⁰ can be more directive – in this instance, setting up the first entry to the choir – and often suggests the need for agreement or some other response, such as is illustrated by Fred Hammond in “Lord Your Grace” (shouting the command “Sing it!” to the choir and his prospective audience)(CD-E: Tr. 24), Bishop Paul Morton in “Let It Rain” (“One more time, one more time, sing it for me will you”)(CD-E: Tr 25), and finally, Clarence Fountain, whose pleading adoration of “the Saviour” in “When I Come To The End Of My Journey” becomes a more increasingly intense shout with each repetition of the phrase, before the emotionalism becomes so overpowering that the shout evolves into a scream that in turn becomes a moan (Figure 31 and CD-E: Tr. 26).

Figure 31: Shout – Clarence Fountain, “When I Come To The End Of My Journey.”
CD-E: Tr. 26

The musical score is written on a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo/mood is marked '8'. The score is divided into three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the phrase 'The' with a G chord above the first measure and a D7 chord above the second measure. The second system shows the phrase 'sa-viour thes sa-viour the sa-viour the sa-viour the sa-viour the sa-viour the' with various ornaments (accents, slurs, and a 'v' symbol) above the notes. The third system shows the phrase 'sa-viour Ah yeah_____ He sure done_ come_ now___ lis- ten!' with a 'U' symbol above the 'Ah yeah' part and a 'U' symbol above the 'He sure' part. The lyrics are written below the staff.

¹⁹⁰ The vocal technique of shouting should not be confused with the “ring shout” that was performed with the feet and not the voice, which is also referred to as “shouting.”

Song-Speech and Gospel Vibrato

Song-speech is similar to classical *sprechstimme* or *sprechgesang*¹⁹¹ where the gospel singer delivers a lyric that is either half sung/half spoken or vacillates between a melodic and a spoken phrase. Clara Hudman-Gholston (The Georgia Peach) provides an early example of this technique in “Jesus Knows How Much We Can Bear” (CD-E: Tr. 27). As the recording demonstrates, Hudman-Gholston preserves a sense of pulse, melodic shape and dialectic emphasis in the phrasing which distinguishes it from prose or speech alone (Figure 32).

Figure 32: Song-Speech A – The Georgia Peach, “Jesus Knows.”
CD-E: Tr. 27

- L1 Think of a time you asked a question
- L2 down in my heart now, what shall I do
- L3 You confide in your friends an loved ones
- L4 but they have trouble too
- L5 There is a God who rules heaven an earth
- L6 In Him there’s release from pain and cares
- L7 And He knows I’m so glad he knows
- L8 Just how much we can bear
- L9 Jesus knows how much we can bear

Hudman-Gholston raises the pitch and intensity of the word “asked” in line 1, draws out the word “confide” in line 3 and also adds emphasis the word “rules” in line 5, in a manner that reflects elements of the African American dialectic practice of this period, seamlessly moving back into melody in line 7. James Moore moves from

¹⁹¹ A type of vocal enunciation that lies between speaking and singing employed in twentieth century Classical music.

spoken acclamation to song-speech in “Let Us Go Back To Church” (CD-E: Tr. 28), providing an excellent illustration of the contrast between speech and song speech in a contemporary context (Figure 33).

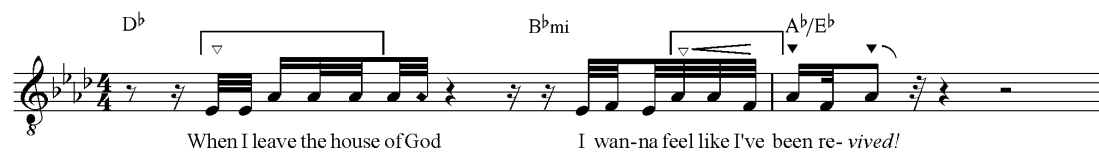
Figure 33: Song-Speech B – James Moore, “Back To Church.”
CD-E: Tr. 28

- L1 I don’t want to feel like I’m in a night club somewhere
- L2 When I leave the house of God
- L3 I want to feel like I’ve been revived
- L4 Can I get a witness in here?
- L5 I understand when David said I will bless the Lord at all times
- L6 And his praises shall continually be in my mouth
- L7 And my soul shall make a boast in the Lord
- L8 And the humble shall hear it all and be glad
- L9 David said I was glad when they said unto me
- L10 Let us go unto the house of the Lord
- L11 Help me sing it.

Moore moves predominantly between the two semi-fixed pitches of E flat and A flat as he delivers lines two through four, allowing the higher A flat to act as an emphasis or stress point, and giving the extemporized text a melodic shape and a distinct pulse that works within but is not bound to the existing time-feel as played by rhythm section (Figure 34). Moore is then able to create additional emphases on key words like “revived” (Figure 35: Line 3) and “at all times” (Figure 35: Line 5) in line five by using gravel and dynamic shifts that bring Moore’s interpretation of the text – a paraphrased version of Psalms 34 and 122 – to the fore.¹⁹²

¹⁹² Holy Bible, KJV.

Figure 34: Song-Speech C – James Moore, “Back To Church.”
CD-E: Tr. 28



Later in the text Moore clips the word “continually,” and emphasises the next phrase “be in my mouth” (Figure 33: Line 6) by elongating the notes and adding new notes to the melody. He aligns himself with the character of David in the text (Figure 35 and CD-E: Tr. 28), and recontextualises this ancient scripture into contemporary gospel practice. Song-speech in particular allows the gospel singer to become gospel preacher, the distinction between which is often quite blurred.

Figure 35: Song-Speech D – James Moore, “Back To Church.”
CD-E: Tr. 28



The vibrato that was favoured by early gospel singers and audiences was generally wider and employed a relatively fast oscillation that either coincided with the beginning of the note and continued throughout, or developed out of a pure sound on a sustained tone. The Kings of Harmony one-time lead singer, Carey Bradley, demonstrates this light, fast vibrato on the 1946 recording of “Little David” (CD-E: Tr. 29). This type of vocal oscillation was common in African American folk singing

from the earliest times, clearly evident in “Lead Me To The Rock” (CD-E: Tr. 30) and “The New Buryin’ Ground” (CD-E: Tr. 31), both recorded in 1936 and clearly reflective of the practice of an earlier period. Cora Martin demonstrates a later development of this fast vibrato (CD-E: Tr 32) with a tone that is richer – also a result of advancing recording techniques – wider, and moving from pure tone to vibrato across a sustained sound. Mahalia Jackson employs the full spectrum of vibrato tones across one phrase in “God Spoke To Me,” with the fast vibrato particularly evident at the end of the phrase where she also employs a light-toned, falsetto-like quality (CD-E: Tr. 33). Finally, although the types of vibrato used by contemporary gospel artists is as diverse as the number of singers, the traditional vibrato sound is still favoured, as illustrated in recordings by Sam Moore (“John The Revelator,” CD-E: Tr. 34) and Yolanda Adams (“After A While,” CD-E: Tr. 35).

Timbre and Register Shifts

Horace Boyer makes several key observations about the timbral quality of the early African American gospel voice; “Singers made no pretense [*sic*] of placing the voice ‘in the head’, as was the practice of European singing masters, but chose the voice of those ‘crying in the wilderness.’”¹⁹³ He describes the voice of gospel singer Arizona Draines as “tense” and “almost shrill”; Mamie Forehand as “low” and “lazy”; Washington Phillip and Joe Taggart as “dirty”; and Willie Johnson as “hoarse” and “strained.” Here Boyer provides us with an insight into the breadth of tonal variation both from singer to singer and within a single performance by one singer – well represented here across all of the quoted recorded examples – and, just as significantly, the community’s acceptance of this. Of additional interest in this field is

¹⁹³ Boyer, *The Golden Age*, pp 11.

the manner in which many gospel singers make little or no attempt to achieve a consistency of tone across their vocal range, choosing to use the naturally occurring tones of the various vocal registers in the head and chest voices. Extremes of range, the use of falsettos and the “break” in the voice that can occur between registers (referred to as a “cry”) are also used by the gospel singer to produce an ever wider palette of tone colour, adding to the power of the emotional delivery of their performance. Marion Williams demonstrates many of these techniques in her recording “There’s A Man” (CD-E: Tr. 36). The opening line in this excerpt, “there’s a man,” demonstrates the nasal quality of her voice, particularly over the sustained notes on “man,” which contrasts markedly with the round, warm tone she achieves in the lower register on the second syllable of the word “a-round.” Williams also re-emphasises the second vowel sound here by taking a breath in the middle of the second vowel (“ou”) and re-sounding it, but with a consonant “h” at the beginning of the vowel for added emphasis (Figure 36). The timbre shift across these measures is dramatic and creates a complex movement in tonal quality that is subjugated to the expressive.

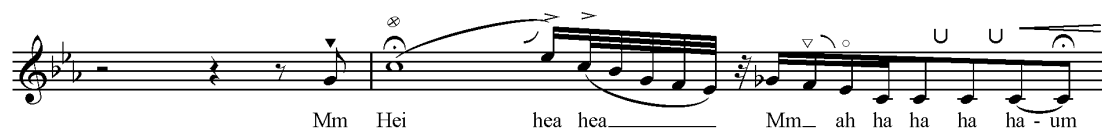
Figure 36: Timbre/Register Shift A – Marion Williams, “There’s A Man.”
CD-E: Tr. 36



At the conclusion of the phrase, Williams employs an elongated moan and high sustained note or “wail,” supported by a fast gospel vibrato, before descending with a

melismatic run that develops into a moan and a short vocal register break or “cry” (Figure 37) that returns to an elongated moan to conclude. The contrast in timbre is marked, particularly when the gravel tone at the beginning of Figure 38 develops into the falsetto-like tone of the sustained E flat, and the register shift or “cry” in bar two, also on E flat. Not only does Williams not try to disguise the break in register and tone, she emphasises it and uses the “cry” to create an intensely rich and powerful emotional expression.

Figure 37: Timbre/Register Shift B – Marion Williams, “There’s A Man.”
CD-E: Tr. 37



Pitch

Slides, Glides, Wails and the Hi-Who

Generally, the terms “glide” “slide” and to a lesser degree “wail” are used interchangeably by gospel musicians and most often without precise definition. For the purposes of clarity, I will define a slide as a glissando-like movement either immediately approaching or leaving a note or other vocal tone that occurs over a shorter time duration. Also, the starting note for the slide (and the glide – refer below) does not necessarily begin from the notated pitch, as this serves more as guide than an exact pitch representation. Cissy Houston provides some excellent examples of this in her recording “Stop” (CD-E: Tr. 38), firstly approaching the word “there” with a short slide from immediately underneath the destination note, “f” (Figure 38).

Figure 38: Slide A – Cissy Houston, “Stop.”
CD-E: Tr. 38



Example 1 in Figure 38 employs the notation that I have assigned for this technique, whereas Example 2 employs a more conventional nomenclature.¹⁹⁴ Following this

¹⁹⁴ The use of the conventional glissando marking indicates a precise fixed diatonic pitch – in this case, “e” natural – from which to begin the portamento, whereas Houston’s beginning note is far less precise. The conventional glissando also indicates a precise timing of the portamento, which can misrepresent the nature of the slide in many instances.

Holy” (CD-E: Tr. 40), gliding from a Bb, up to a D natural and back though a C to the starting tone, Bb (Figure 41).

Figure 41: Glide A (1) – Aretha Franklin, “Wholy Holy.”
CD-E: Tr. 40



As part of the glide, the initial Bb in bar 1 of Figure 41 is barely sounded, is pitched sharper than the written note indicates, and is difficult to meaningfully notate with traditional rhythmic values. Therefore, Figure 42 employs the previously established nomenclature for an upward and downward slide, with a duration bracket above to indicate the length and pitch direction of the glide.

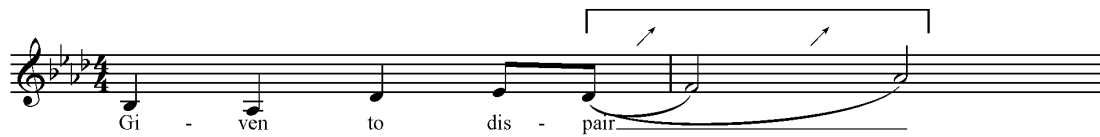
Figure 42: Glide B (2) – Aretha Franklin, “Wholy Holy.”
CD-E: Tr. 40



Finally, Mahalia Jackson employs this technique in “Hands Of God” (Figure 43) in a manner that could be considered typical for this technique, coming in the final measures and at the moment of greatest intensity - the pinnacle point of the song – and continuing to both employ both the slide and the glide to the conclusion of the song (CD-E: Tr. 41).

Figure 43: Glide B – Mahalia Jackson, “Hand Of God.”

CD-E: Tr. 41

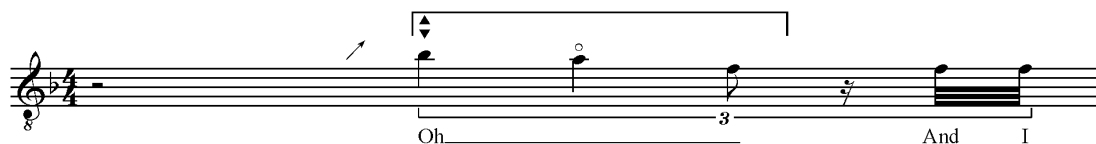


The “wail” is often preceded by a slide or glide, and is a relatively high-pitched, sustained tone or series of sustained tones that the gospel singer places above an existing song. The wail may or may not contain a specific lyric content and is often accompanied by varying degrees of gravel tone. It functions in a similar fashion to a moan, but is generally more positive in effect, as Sam Cooke gently demonstrates in “I’m Gonna Build On That Shore” (CD-E: Tr. 42). He employs the same technique in a more aggressive and passionate manner in “Until Jesus Calls Me Home” (CD-E: Tr. 43), where he uses single words from the lyric line and added interjections such as “well I’m gonna sing” and “yeah about Jesus” for his short but impassioned wails.

Alex Bradford uses an “Oh” sound for his gravel-inflected wail in “If You See My Saviour” (CD-E: Tr. 44), in which he also uses cry in between the first and second tones (Figure 44).

Figure 44: Wail A – Alex Bradford, “If You See My Saviour.”

CD-E: Tr. 44



James Cleveland demonstrates a wail that occurs within the normal progression of the lyric line in the song “Peace Be Still”, opening the second vowel sound on “tempest,” allowing the note to sustain with an increase dynamic level and bringing a greater emphasis to the lyric “the tempest is raging” in a style reminiscent of classical word-painting. (CD-E: Tr. 45).

The wail is seen in its most dramatic form in Lanelle Collins’ solo at the conclusion of “Work That Thang Out’ (CD-E: Tr. 46) where, following a longer passage of wail-like phrases (“He’s able,” “He’ll work it out,” “He’ll fix it”), she concludes with an elongated wail over the expression “o yeah,” adding an emphatic agreement to the sentiments outlined in the preceding lines (Figure 45).

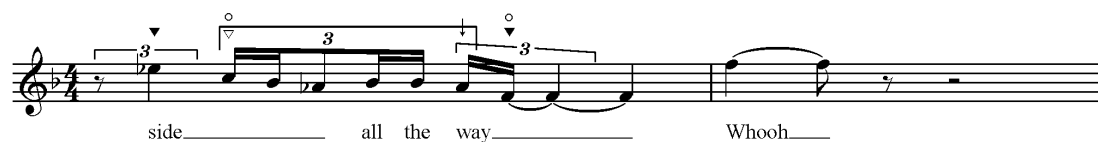
Figure 45: Wail B – Lanelle Collins. “Work That Thang Out.”
CD-E: Tr. 46

A musical score snippet in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The top staff shows the melody with lyrics: 'He'll fix it up, He'll fix it Oh yeah!'. The bottom staff, labeled 'Choir', shows accompaniment with lyrics: 'work that thang out! Work it out!'. A wail is indicated by a bracket above the 'Oh' note in the melody. The melody ends with a half note G4 and a half note A4, with a wail bracket above them.

The “high who” is a device that Horace Boyer describes as deriving from the manner in which Marion Williams would sing a high note using an “ooh” sound, preceding it

with a “wh” sound for added attack.¹⁹⁵ This becomes standard practice in gospel, and typically the “high who” is placed at the end of one chorus leading into another. Williams uses this technique at the conclusion of “Nobody Knows, Nobody Cares” (CD-E: Tr. 47), linking two choruses together with an increasing gravel tone, two breaks (cries) and a high who (Figure 46).

Figure 46: High Who – Marion Williams, “Nobody Knows, Nobody Cares.”
CD-E: Tr. 47



The high who is also employed in Lillian Lilly's "Gotta Have Faith" between the end of the verse and the beginning of the chorus (CD-E: Tr. 48), James Cleveland's "Great Day" (CD-E: Tr. 49), where it is used more frequently throughout, and finally a particularly interesting "double" high who in another Cleveland recording, "The Blood Of Jesus" (CD-E: Tr. 50).

¹⁹⁵ Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 107.

Blues Inflection

Gospel singers will often superimpose a “blues inflection,”¹⁹⁶ or an improvised minor pentatonic embellishment, on a gospel melody that is of a predominantly major tonality, resulting in a marked shift in both sound, intent and affect that controversially recalls the “down home” sound of the blues of the Antebellum South. Mahalia Jackson uses this technique in “The Upper Room” (CD-E: Tr. 51), where the blues inflection is particularly obvious towards the end of this recording. The music momentarily calms with the lead bass taking over the melody, and Jackson outlining the major tonality (G major to a D7 chord) with a repetitive, backing vocal-style rhythmic phrase “the upper room, the upper room” (Figure 47).

Figure 47: Blues Inflection A – Mahalia Jackson, “The Upper Room.”

CD-E: Tr. 51

Light swing feel

G Mahalia G D7 D7

In the up-per room. In the up-per room. In the up-per room. In the up-per room.

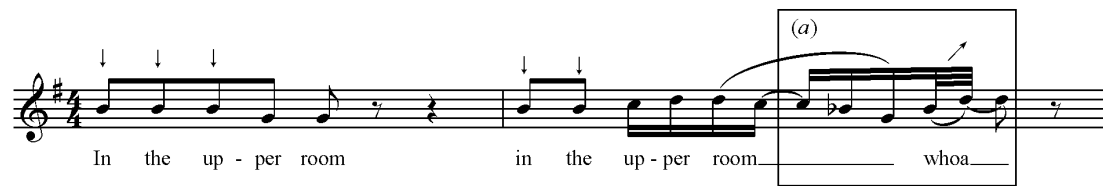
Bass Solo

In the up-per room room with my Lord. Now now's

Jackson then increases the dynamic level and intensity of her vocal line, superimposing a series of blues inflections in her improvised embellishments on the original melody, marked here at Figure 48 (a).

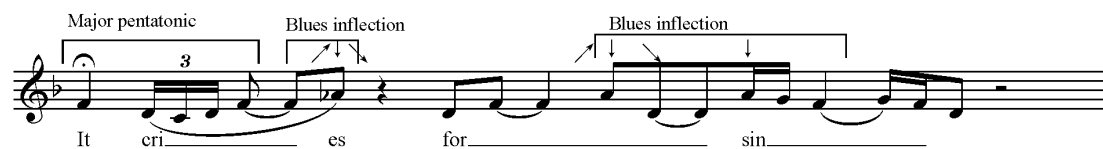
¹⁹⁶ The scale degrees of the flattened 3rd, 7th, and 5th are common to the construction of blues melodies.

Figure 48: Blues Inflection B – Mahalia Jackson, “The Upper Room”.
CD-E: Tr. 51



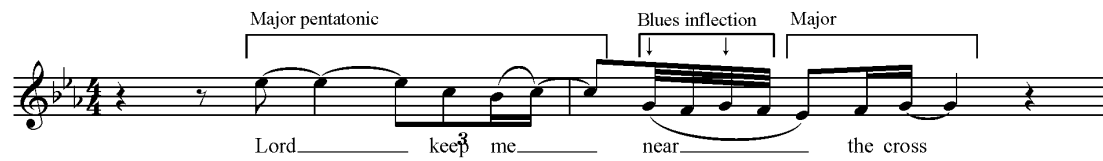
The subtlety of this technique is illustrated by Marion Williams in “Shall These Cheeks Go Dry” where she establishes the song in F major pentatonic with the notes F, D and C. She immediately follows this with a blues inflection, singing the blue-note Ab, followed by downward slide, that immediately changes the impact and resonance of the song (Figure 49 and CD-E: Tr. 52).

Figure 49: Blues Inflection C – Marion Williams, “Shall These Cheeks Go Dry.”
CD-E: Tr. 52



Finally, the soloist on James Cleveland’s “Just A Sinner” has based the majority of her improvised embellishments on the major and major pentatonic scales (CD-E: Tr. 53). With both “G” scale tones in bar two sounding as “blue-notes” – sung lower than written pitch, but not low enough to be accurately notated as a Gb – the blues inflection she uses towards the end of the excerpt stands out for the subtle change it brings about in melodic and emotional intent and direction (Figure 50).

Figure 50: Blues Inflection D – James Cleveland, “Just A Sinner.”
CD-E: Tr. 53



Passing Tones, Bends, Neighbour Tones and the Gospel Grupetto

Horace Boyer was the first to describe and notate the following fundamental melodic ornaments, expected to be executable by the majority of gospel singers.¹⁹⁷

1. Ascending and descending passing tones
2. Upper and lower neighbour tones
3. Bends
4. Gospel Grupetto¹⁹⁸

Boyer originally analysed a “gospelized” version of the traditional Joseph M. Scriven and Charles C. Converse hymn “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” to describe and notate these ornaments, and, expanding on this research, I have applied Boyer’s analysis to another frequently “gospelized” traditional hymn, “It Is Well” by Horatio Spafford and Philip Bliss (Figure 51).

¹⁹⁷ Boyer, “Contemporary Gospel Music,” 24-27.

¹⁹⁸ Boyer also describes the “portamento” or slide, which has been previously addressed in this exegesis under Pitch: *Slides, Glides, Wails and the Hi-Who*, 104.

Figure 51: “It Is Well.” – H. Spafford and P. Bliss.¹⁹⁹

1. When peace, like a riv - er, at - tend - eth my way, When sor - rows like sea bil-lows roll;

What - ev - er my lot, Thou has taught me to say, It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Refrain

It is well, _____ with my soul, _____ It is well, it is well, with my soul.
It is well, _____ with my soul,

Dello Thedford and I arranged this hymn for a contemporary male vocal quartet in 1996 (Figure 52), and although the notation is more accurate here, particularly with the use of the compound meter,²⁰⁰ there remains a significant and audible difference between the arrangement as it is notated and as gospel singers perform it, especially within the melody.

¹⁹⁹ *Timeless Truths*, 2007 [website on-line]; available from http://library.timelesstruths.org/music/It_Is_Well_with_My_Soul/score; Internet; accessed 4 May, 2007.

²⁰⁰ As previously stated, gospel songs written in simple time signatures were traditionally interpreted in compound time (4/4 becoming 12/8), but contemporary practice now also notates them in compound time as is illustrated in Figure 52.

Figure 52: “It Is Well.” – Arrangement by D. Thedford and A. Legg.

Slowly and soulfully

When peace— like a ri - ver at - tend - ded my way, when

When peace— like a ri - ver at - tend - ded my way, when

When peace— like a ri - ver at - tend - ded my way, when

When peace— like a ri - ver at - tend - ded my way, when

4

sor - rows like sea bil - lows roll _____ what

sor - rows like sea bil - lows roll _____ what

sor - rows like sea bil - lows roll _____ what

sor - rows like sea bil - lows roll _____ what

6

e— ver my lot, thou has taught met to say _____ It— is

e— ver my lot— thou has taught met to say _____ It— is

e— ver my lot,— thou has taught met to say _____ It— is

e— ver my lot,— thou has taught met to say _____ It— is

Figure 52: “It Is Well.” – Arrangement by D. Thedford and A. Legg (cont).

The musical score for "It Is Well" is presented in four staves. The first staff is a vocal line starting at measure 9, with lyrics "well it is well Well, with my soul". The second staff is a piano accompaniment line. The third staff is a vocal line with lyrics "well it is well Well, with my soul". The fourth staff is a piano accompaniment line with lyrics "well it is well Well, with my soul". The score is in 12/8 time and features a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat).

The following “gospelized” rendering of the melody is taken from the melody in the first tenor part that, in conjunction with the analysis that follows, further illustrates the fundamental melodic devices that Boyer has previously described (Figure 53).

Figure 53: “It Is Well.” – “Gospelized” Melodic Line.

Slowly and soulfully

Tenor 1

When peace__ like a ri - ver at - tend - ded my way, when

sor - rows like sea bil - lows roll_____ what

e - ver my lot, thou has taught met to say_____ It__ is

well_____ it__ is well_____ Well, with my soul

A^b7

C^bma9 E^9

1. Ascending and descending passing tones

Passing tones join two notes of the original melody that sit a third apart. Letter (b) in bar 3 highlights the ascending passing tone, whilst letter (a) in bar 2 highlights the descending.

2. Upper and lower neighbour tones

The vocal agility of the gospel singer is in part demonstrated in their ability to “execute an ornamentation in a short rhythmic space” for which the use of upper and lower neighbour can be used. The lower neighbour is indicated in bar 6 at letter (e) with the upper neighbour in bar 5 at letter (d).

3. Bends

Boyer states that the upper and lower bend are equally common and occur where the singer “plays” the last note of a phrase or line, meaning that they begin the note on pitch and then bend the note upwards or downwards by varying intervals, highlighted here in bar 7 at (f) – a downward bend of a fourth – and in bar 9 at (g) – an upward bend of a second.

4. Gospel Grupetto

The gospel grupetto,²⁰¹ also referred to as a “melisma” or traditionally as “worrying the note,”²⁰² is described by Stephen Henderson as “. . . the folk expression for the device of altering the pitch of a note in a given passage or for other kinds of ornamentation often associated with the melismatic singing in the Black tradition.”²⁰³ Horace Boyer originally used the term “grupetto” for this technique, describing it as the execution of “. . . several tones in rapid succession, either in conjunct (stepwise) or disjunct (separated) motion, either ascending or descending, or in a ascent-descent combination.”²⁰⁴ However, the use of the term “grupetto” in this context is misleading in that it has been in common usage in the Western European classical tradition since the sixteenth century and is clearly defined as “a term used in the 16th century for a trill, and in succeeding periods for a turn,”²⁰⁵ and therefore I have consequently applied the term “gospel grupetto” to clearly differentiate these two terms.

²⁰¹ Although Boyer originally refers to this technique as the “grupetto,” the term is misleading given that its usage within the classical tradition is quite different. Therefore I employ the term “gospel grupetto” to both reflect Boyer’s original research and to further clarify it.

²⁰² Originally described by W.C. Handy as “worrying over a note,” referring specifically to the bending of final notes in a phrase.

²⁰³ Stephen Henderson, *Understanding The New Black Poetry* (New York, William Morrow And Co. Inc. 1973), 41.

²⁰⁴ Boyer, “Contemporary Gospel Music,” 25.

²⁰⁵ *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 11 May 2007), http://www.grovemusic.com.ezproxy.utas.edu.au/shared/views/article.html?from=search&session_search_id=530359801&hitnum=1§ion=music.11876

The gospel grupetto occurs over a number of tones, usually more than three, and either leads to a new harmony, or simply re-sounds the existing one. A disjunct gospel grupetto that re-sounds the existing harmony is marked here in bar 4 at letter (*c*), with a conjunct gospel grupetto that moves from a Cbmaj⁹ chord to an E⁹ chord marked in bar 10 at letter (*h*). Table 5 provides additional audio examples of gospel vocal ornaments that are also cross-referenced with their notated examples in Figure 54.

Table 5: Vocal Ornaments – Additional Audio Examples.

Vocal Ornament	CD-E: Track No.	Song Title and Gospel Singer	Figure 54 Reference
Lower passing tone	Tr. 54	“Jesus Knows How Much We Can Bear,” the Georgia Peach	Fig 54.1 (a)
Lower neighbour tone	Tr. 55	“There Is A Balm,” Mahalia Jackson	Fig 54.2 (b)
Lower passing tone	Tr. 55	“There Is A Balm,” Mahalia Jackson	Fig 54.2 (c)
Upwards bend	Tr 56	“I Can Go To Go In Prayer,” Albertina Walker	Fig 54.3 (d)
Downwards bend (major second)	Tr. 57	“His Eye Is On The Sparrow,” Mahalia Jackson	Fig 54.4 (e)
Simple gospel gruppetto	Tr. 57	“His Eye Is On The Sparrow,” Mahalia Jackson	Fig 54.4 (f)
Upper neighbour tone	Tr. 57	“His Eye Is On The Sparrow,” Mahalia Jackson	Fig 54.4 (g)
Complex gospel gruppetto	Tr. 58	“His Eye Is On The Sparrow,” Tanya Blount & Lauryn Hill	Fig 54.5 (h)
Downwards bend (octave)	Tr. 58	“His Eye Is On The Sparrow,” Tanya Blount & Lauryn Hill	Fig 54.5 (i)
Double upper neighbour tone	Tr. 58	“His Eye Is On The Sparrow,” Tanya Blount & Lauryn Hill	Fig 54.5 (j)

Figure 54: Vocal Ornaments – Notated Additional Audio Examples.

Fig. 54.1 - Lower passing tone

Fig. 54.2 - Lower neighbor and lower passing tone

Fig. 54.3 - Upward bend

Fig 54.4 - Downward bend, simple gospel gruppetto and upper neighbour

Fig. 54.5 - Complex gospel gruppetto, octave downward bend & upper neighbor

He will teach us

There

Makes no diff - erence

on the spar row

eye is on the spar - row

Rhythm

Gospel Phrasing and Syncopation

It is commonplace that Negro church music and secular music not only “swing” but also have much more sophisticated elements of off-beats, retarded beats, and anticipated beats than does Euro-American folk music in general.²⁰⁶

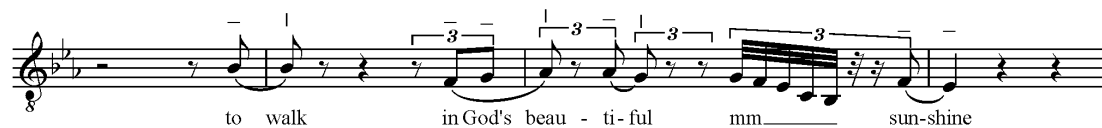
The sophistication of rhythmic elements that Courlander refers to leads to a musical environment in which phrasing, for the gospel singer, is always subordinated to the expressive and rhythmic momentum and “swing” of the song. Sentences, expressions and even monosyllabic words can be broken for textual emphasis and dramatic effect in a manner quite different from the dominant European classical tradition. In the song “Good To Be Kept By Jesus” (CD-E: Tr. 59) James Cleveland and his vocal ensemble sing the lyric “to walk in God’s beautiful sunshine” in 3/4 time and at a slow tempo. Taking the melody notes from the original recording, a more conventional notation for this lyric is suggested in Figure 55, with the contrasting transcription of Cleveland’s actual performance written in Figure 56.

²⁰⁶ Courlander, *Negro Folk Music*, 29.

Figure 55: Gospel Phrasing 1 – James Cleveland, “Good To Be Kept By Jesus.”
CD-E: Tr. 59



Figure 56: Gospel Phrasing 2 – James Cleveland, “Good To Be Kept By Jesus.”
CD-E: Tr. 59



Cleveland and his singers repetitively break the sentence phrase in unusual places according to Western Classical tradition; after the word “walk”; after the second syllable of “beau-ti-ful”; and between “beautiful” and “sunshine” (using a simple moan-like grupetto). Additionally, “to walk” is phrased almost as one word, “to-walk”; the singers move rapidly from the vowel to the consonant “n” in the word “in,” elongating the “n” sound and therefore adding a slight but perceptible rhythmic emphasis; and the break up of the word “beautiful” is placed rhythmically so as to add emphasis to the underlying swing/triplet rhythmic grouping.²⁰⁷ Cleveland uses these African American concepts of rhythm and phrasing to communicate and express not

²⁰⁷ Traditionally, the first quaver of swung quaver groups is longer than the second and receives a slight emphasis or added weight. As a result, every second quaver appears to “fall” into each subsequent longer quaver, providing “swing” with one vital component that contributes to its inherent sense of forward momentum.

only the music, but his character and his message with great intensity and depth of meaning (see CD-E: Tr. 59).

Mavis Staples also provides a simple example of “gospel phrasing” in the first verse of “Are You Sure” (CD-E: Tr. 60). Staples takes a breath and breaks the natural sentence phrase “sorry now and take-a an inventory, you’ll come up with a different story” between “take-a” and “an inventory,” using the “a” sound after “take” as an additional rhythmic device and not a textual one. She then breaks the subsequent phrase in the same place with an audible breath – “you’ll come up with (breath) a different story,” allowing the fundamental rhythmic structure to dominate her lyric delivery. Rather than opting for a succession of smooth and interconnected lines, the gospel singer constructs the rhythm of their phrase in a way that works within and emphasises the rhythmic subdivisions of the pulse that contemporary musicians refer to as the “feel,” “groove” or “beat.”

Breathing between words and short phrases is not considered improper to the idiom. The audible breath intake and expulsion of air acts as a rhythmic factor and is an essential part of black timing and rhythmic pacing.²⁰⁸

This rhythmic technique of using the breath as part of the phrase or “audible rhythmic breathing” is particularly evident in the performances of Mahalia Jackson. In her live European recording “Didn’t It Rain,” Jackson breaks a succession of sentences by punctuating her singing with audible, rhythmic breaths – the air is expelled with an “ah” or “oh” grunt-like sound before the breath is taken – at the end of each short

²⁰⁸ Williams-Jones, “Afro-American Gospel Music,” 382.

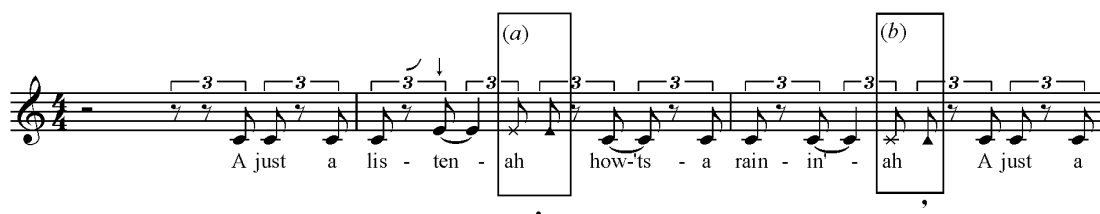
phrase that she joins to the final syllable of the previous word (Figure 57 and CD-E: Tr. 61).

Figure 57: Audible Rhythmic Breathing 1 – Mahalia Jackson, “Didn’t It Rain.”
CD-E: Tr. 61

- L1 A just a listen~ah, howt’s a rainin~ah
- L2 A just a listen~ah, howt’s a rainin~oh
- L3 All day~uh, all night~uh
- L4 All night, all day~uh
- L5 A just a listen~ah, howt’s a rainin~ah
- L6 Some cryin~uh some runnin’~uh
- L7 Some prayin’~uh some sighin’
- L8 A just a listen~ah, howt’s a rainin~ah
- L8 A just a listen~ah, howt’s a rainin
- L9 Didn’t it (rhythmic breath) - rain children~ah rain oh my Lord

Figure 58 illustrates Jackson’s use of audible rhythmic breathing and the grunt-like sounds “ah” at (a) and (b) that she syncopates, placing them on the last quaver of the triplet quaver subdivision, which gives an effecting emphasis to the gentle “gospel swing” of the melody.

Figure 58: Audible Rhythmic Breathing 2 – Mahalia Jackson, “Didn’t It Rain.”
CD-E: Tr. 61



Jackson also truncates the mid-point of lines 1, 2, 8 and 9 – “how it’s a raining” becomes “Howt’s a rainin” – enabling her to add further rhythmic emphasis, in this case, to the syncopation at the beginning of this phrase. The resulting “audible rhythmic breathing” is a style of rhythmic singing where the all-important subdivision of the beat – in this case, the triplet swing feel – is explicit and carried by the combination of sung note, breath noise, and other non-textual utterances. The gospel singer’s performance contains rhythm and feel, melody and soul, emotion and meaning; in fact, all the required fundamental musical information is contained within the vocal performance itself.

Repetition, Emphasis and Rhythmic Singing

The gospel singing style also reflects the African American oratory and preaching styles and traditions that Williams-Jones refers to as the “rhetorical solo style of the black gospel preacher.”

In seeking to communicate the gospel message, there is little difference between the gospel singer and the gospel preacher in the approach to his subject... the singer perhaps being considered the lyrical extension of the rhythmically rhetorical style of the preacher. Inherent in this also is the concept of black rhetoric, folk expressions, bodily movement, charismatic energy, cadence, tonal range and timbre.²⁰⁹

One significant aspect of this “preaching style” is the emphasis of different words within the repetition of an important phrase. In his 1996 “Homecoming” address at the Greater Saint Mark Missionary Baptist Church, Dr Anthony Campbell concluded with the repetition of two phrases, “leave it there,” and “take your burden to the Lord

²⁰⁹ Williams-Jones, “Afro-American Gospel Music,” 381,

and leave it there,” which he borrowed from the title (and also key lyric line) of Charles Tindley’s gospel song, “Leave It There”:

You must trust – and leave it there. You must not doubt – and leave it there.
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there. Take your burden to the Lord
and leave it there. Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.²¹⁰

This hymn is widely known and loved among the African American church community, and Campbell’s use of such a text certainly resonated with the congregation for this reason. However, of equal significance to this resonance was the manner in which he delivered the final phrase, for with each repetition of “take your burden to the Lord and leave it there,” the dynamic level and amount of gravel in his voice increased dramatically, the pitch of his voice rose and finally he over-emphasised different words within that one phrase (the underscoring marks the emphasis).

Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there. Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there. Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there. Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there. Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there. Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.²¹¹

Gospel singers use repetition and emphasis in a similar fashion to add both rhythmic character and often new meaning and interpretation to the lyric as well. These devices are most clearly demonstrated again by the Ward Singers in “Surely God Is Able,” (refer also to Chapter 1: “The Vamp,” page 40). Clara Ward’s re-arrangement of the

²¹⁰ The author first heard Dr Campbell use this phrase in a sermon delivered on “Homecoming Sunday” at the Greater St Mark’s First Missionary Baptist church in Tuskegee, Alabama on August 17, 1997.

²¹¹ The congregational response to this was overwhelming. Initially seated they began to rise to their feet, interjecting vocal (“yes sir,” “my, my my,” “that’s right”) and physical (hand-clapping, foot-stomping) affirmations that rapidly increased in intensity and volume, developing finally into shouts and screams of such fervour that his final words were all but lost under the cacophonous noise.

Brewster song – originally titled “Our God Is Able” (see also Appendix 2) – employs a completely new introduction section, which she based on the repetition of the word “surely” (see Figure 59).

Figure 59: Repetition & Emphasis – Clara Ward, “Surely God Is Able.”
CD-E: Tr. 62

The musical score for Clara Ward's "Surely God Is Able" is presented in two systems. The first system features a Lead part and an SSA (Soprano, Soprano, Alto) part. The Lead part begins with the lyrics "Sure-ly" and includes musical notation with notes, rests, and a triplet. The SSA part follows with the same lyrics. The second system continues the Lead part with the lyrics "ab - le to car - ry" and includes musical notation with notes, rests, and a triplet. The SSA part continues with the lyrics "He's ab - le to car - ry you through" and includes musical notation with notes, rests, and a triplet. The score is written in 8/8 time and includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and triplets.

Such was the power of Ward’s arrangement – underscored by the impassioned employment of repetition and emphasis – that it redefined the song in the public consciousness. As a result, Brewster subsequently re-titled his original composition “Surely God Is Able,” reflecting the significance of Ward’s reinterpretation, and in deference to its subsequent widespread popularity. Ward’s emphasis and re-emphasis of the word “surely” is insistent and pleading in the opening line “surely, surely, surely, surely, He’s able to carry you through,” and is immediately reflective of the

preaching style, using repetition and emphasis to create a reinterpretation of the phrase for greater emotional impact (CD-E: Tr. 62).²¹²

Aretha Franklin uses exaggerated repetition and emphasis in “You’ll Never Walk Alone” (CD-E: Tr. 63) where she initially sings the line “at the end, at the end of the storm.” Franklin’s vocal style then becomes more improvisational and “preacher-like” (Figure 60), and in marked contrast to the original song lyrics (Figure 61), she uses these techniques to add increasingly to the passion and personal emotional content of the song towards the climax of her performance (CD-E: Tr. 64).

Figure 60: Repetition & Emphasis – Franklin lyrics, “You’ll Never Walk Alone.”
CD-E: Tr 64

- L1 all you gotta do is walk on – walk on through the wind
- L2 and while you’re walkin (yes)
- L3 just a little bit of hope, (oh), just a little bitta hope in your heart,
- L4 Even you that, I promise you that you’ll -
- L5 You’ll never, you won’t ever, you won’t ever, God won’t ever let you
- L6 Won’t ever let you walk alone, oh no He won’t
- L7 You’ll never walk, you won’t walk alone

²¹² Ward also uses repetition in Figure 58(a), resounding the “ee” vowel sound of sure-ly to further add emphasis to the pleading nature of her interpretation, as well as a disjunct descending gospel grupetto in Figure 58(b).

Figure 61: Repetition & Emphasis – Original lyrics, “You’ll Never Walk Alone.”

- L1 Walk on through the wind, walk on through the rain
- L2 Though your dreams be tossed and blown
- L3 Walk on, walk on with hope in your heart
- L4 And you’ll never walk alone, you’ll never walk alone.

Additionally, Fred Hammond plays on this concept in “My My My God Is Good,” where he uses a colloquial expression that derives from this practice (“My, my, my.”) as the title and rhythmic propulsion for the main “hook”²¹³ of the song (CD-E: Tr. 65).

The use of rhythmic emphasis is also a significant factor in the creation of “feel” and “groove.”²¹⁴ The gospel quartets often employed a particularly rhythmic style of singing that gave considerable forward momentum to their performances. The Golden Gate Quartet provide an excellent example of rhythmic emphasis in “My Time Done Come” (CD-E: Tr. 66) where the opening lyric “my time done come” is preceded by the rhythmic phrase “a-well-a,” which is also punctuated with audible rhythmic breaths that firmly establish the feel of the song from the outset. The phrasing of the subsequent lyrics for the chorus – “my time done come, little children, my time done

²¹³ The “hook” is a term contemporary musicians apply to the main feature of a song that “hooks” the audience’s interest and can be of textural, instrumental, lyric, rhythmic or melodic content.

²¹⁴ Although the terms “feel” and “groove” are used somewhat interchangeably by contemporary musicians, “feel” is usually applied in a broadly generic sense whereas “groove” is usually applied to the specific instance of a generic type. For example, “swing” is a type of feel that at a fundamental level usually denotes a triplet quaver subdivision of the crotchet beat. However, the interpretation of this subdivision alters depending on the type of swing i.e. from which historical period, you are trying to play. The notion of a gospel “swing” portrayed here is vastly different to the hard bop swing of luminaries Cannonball Adderly and Sonny Rollins for example, and so in practice, where musicians refer to a “feel” they will also often indicate the “type” by affixing a defining name or historical period to the description i.e., a “Coltrane swing” or “Trad swing.” The term “groove” generally refers to a type of rhythm section pattern (particularly bass and drums) that establishes the feel of a song i.e. a “Skip-shuffle” (see Appendix 1) or “funk-style groove,” both of which dictate a particular type of rhythmic pattern, albeit sometimes within extremely broad parameters. Ultimately, the expressions only provide a “guide” as to intention that musicians re-shape according to context.

come” – over-emphasises the contrasts between the short and long notes that in turn emphasises the underlying crotchet pulse, giving the vocal parts a “bounce” that propels the music forwards (Figure 62).

Figure 62: Rhythmic Singing – Golden Gate Quartet, “My Time Done Come.”
CD-E: Tr. 66

The musical score is for the song "My Time Done Come" by the Golden Gate Quartet. It features four vocal parts: Tenor (T.), Baritone (Bar.), Bass (B.), and a second Tenor part. The score is written in 4/4 time and includes lyrics and rhythmic markings.

First System:

- Tenor 1:** My time done
- Tenor 2:** a well a my time done_ come my time done
- Baritone:** My time done
- Bass:** Great God well My time done

Second System:

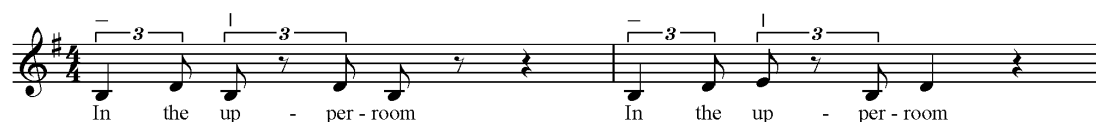
- T. 1:** come lit - tle chil - dren my time done come.
- T. 2:** come lit - tle chil - dren my time done come.
- Bar.:** come lit - tle chil - dren my time done come.
- B.:** come lit - tle chil - dren my time done come.

The score includes various rhythmic markings such as accents, slurs, and breath marks (indicated by a vertical line with a flag) to emphasize the "bounce" of the music.

The combination of several techniques – audible rhythmic breaths, exaggerated note durations, rhythmic emphasis of most second and fourth crotchet beats, elongation and truncation of vowels and consonants – produces a gospel singing style that is propelled forward under its own, self-generated momentum. Mahalia Jackson uses these same techniques in one of the previous examples, “The Upper Room,” where

she sings the repeated phrase – “in the upper room” – with an exaggerated rhythmic emphasis that makes the phrase sounds as “the up-perroom” (Figure 63).

Figure 63: Rhythmic Singing – Mahalia Jackson, “The Upper Room.”
CD-E: Tr. 67



Jackson sings two full-value notes (“in” and “the”) followed by a shortened tone (“up”) finishing the phrase with two more full-value notes (“per-room”), also creating a bounce in the rhythm that drives the song forward. Although it could be argued that the meaning of this simple repetitive phrase is never totally obscured – the lyric has already appeared on numerous occasions, and it is also in the title of the song – nevertheless the rhythmic emphasis and momentum at this point is of far greater importance to the vocal performance than the lyric.²¹⁵ The Harmony Kings also simply illustrate the use of repetition, emphasis and rhythmic singing in “Little David” (CD-E: Tr. 68) where they sing the first line “Little David, play that on your harp, hallelu” with the following additional, non-textual syllables whose function is to support the overall rhythmic momentum or feel of the song: “Little David play that on-a-your harp and-a hallelu, hallelu.” The repetition of the acclamation “hallelu” is preceded by an audible breath that breaks the phrase and further adds to the dynamic

²¹⁵ Rhythmic singing of non-text related sounds was a technique pioneered by the early male vocal quartets, and was used to accompany the soloist who needed a rhythmic and harmonic foundation over which to sing. The supporting singers used a series of seven evenly spaced sounds placed on each swung quaver in a bar of 4/4, except for the last quaver, on which they placed a rest. The most common phrases used, “Oom-ma-lank-a-lank-a-lank” and “Oh my Lord-y Lord-y Lord,” (Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 95) provided the necessary rhythmic emphasis, momentum and harmonic foundation for the soloist to sing over, and because the only function of these types of phrases was to accompany and not add lyrically to the song, they did not detract from the message and emotional delivery of the soloist.

emphasis that the Kings apply to it, both drawing the listeners' attention to the phrase "hallelu" and emphasising the second beat of the bar in a syncopated-like manner.

Finally, The Fairfield Four articulately demonstrate the use of gospel repetition, emphasis and rhythmic singing in "Children Go Where I Send Thee," (Figure 64 and CD-E: Tr. 69).

Figure 64: Repetition, Emphasis and Rhythmic Singing – The Fairfield Four,
 “Children Go Where I Send Thee.”
 CD-E: Tr. 69

Moderate Gospel Swing

Where will you send me? I'm gon-na send thee one by one a

Where will you send me? I'm gon-na send thee one by one a

Where will you send me? I'm gon-na send thee one by one a

Where will you send me? I'm gon-na send thee one by one a

one for the lit-tle bid-dy a ba-by a born by the vir-gin

one for the lit-tle bid-dy a ba-by a born by the vir-gin

one for the lit-tle bid-dy a ba-by a born by the vir-gin

one for the lit-tle bid ba by a born by the vir-gin Ma

a Ma-ry Born, bo-m born in Beth-le-hem.

a Ma-ry Born, bo-m born in Beth-le-hem.

a Ma-ry Born, bo-m born in Beth-le-hem.

ry Born bo-m bo rn Beth-a-le-hem.

They use a gentle handclap on the backbeat²¹⁶ in this medium tempo gospel swing feel, and immediately emphasise the word “send” at (a) in bar 2, by preceding it with an audible breath on beat 1, and by truncating the vowel sound (“eh”) and elongating the consonant “n.” The duration of the word “send” appears shorter than the notated crotchet would indicate as the consonant “n” (also used with “m”) is softer in dynamic than the vowel, as the mouth is closed, with the sound resonating through the nasal cavity. The word acquires an attack as a result, and The Fairfield Four employ this technique throughout this song – marked here in Figure 64 at (a), (b), (c) and (d) – adding a gentle rhythmic emphasis to the melody that conventional notation does not adequately describe. The phrase breaks between bars 1 and 2 (“where will you – send me”), bars 5 and 6 (“little biddy – a baby”) and bars 7 and 8 (“born of the virgin – a Mary”), are all immediately preceded by an audible rhythmic breath and an additional non-textual rhythmic syllable (“a”). The complex combination of these techniques produces a musical expression that is simply elegant, and it this deceptive simplicity that belies the complexity of the rhythmic and other techniques that are foundational constituents of the feel and character of the gospel song.

Lyrics

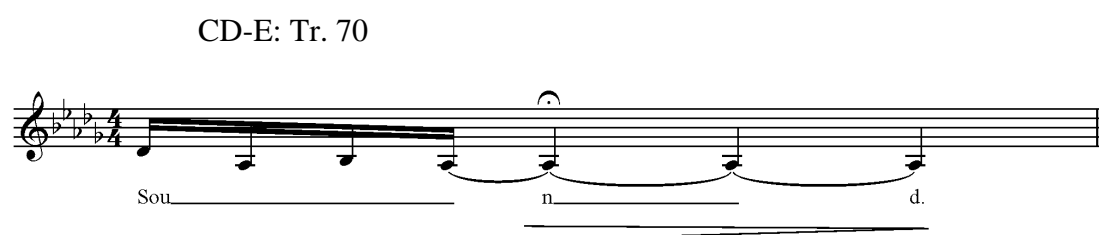
Elongation and Truncation

As demonstrated in the previous example by the Fairfield Four, gospel singers frequently “play” with the durations of notes for rhythmic and textual emphasis. In particular, the “m” and “n” consonants at the conclusions of a phrase or word are often “elongated,” following a “truncated” vowel, with the “m” or “n” sound

²¹⁶ The term “backbeat” refers to the stressing of beats 2 and 4 in 4/4 meter. Beats 2 and 4 therefore characteristically function as the “strong” beats for the majority of African American inspired contemporary popular music.

resonated through the nasal cavity with the mouth closed. Mahalia Jackson demonstrates this technique in “Amazing Grace” (CD-E: Tr. 70) with the lyric “how sweet the sound,” where she initially adds a slight dynamic emphasis to the consonant “s” in the word “sound” before using an upper neighbour tone to precede an elongated “n” at the conclusion of the word (Figure 65). Jackson does not sustain the Ab in a traditional manner with the open vowel sound but moves quickly to the consonant “n” where her tone is warm and softer and moan-like in dynamic as a result of the sound resonating in the nose with the mouth closed.

Figure 65: Elongation – Mahalia Jackson, “Amazing Grace.”



Marion Williams demonstrates this technique in “There’s A Man” where she elongates the “n” in “man” to enable her to sustain both the note and the mood she has created (CD-E: Tr. 71). The Golden Gate Quartet also utilise this technique in “Hush” (CD-E: Tr. 72). To contrast the heightened tension of the line “death comes creepin’ in the room” which they sing at a moderately loud dynamic, all four singers subsequently quickly drop the dynamic level in the next line “soon one morning,” elongating the “n” on “soon,” and truncating the “i” vowel and elongating the “ng” sound at the end of “morning.” They masterfully use this technique to create a sense of “whispering” to their audience, as the subject is sensitive and not to be spoken “out loud.” Lastly, Fred Hammond uses elongation in a more contemporary setting but still

to great effect in “Interlude #1” (CD-E: Tr. 71) where he elongates the “n” on the word “pain,” changing and personalising the character of that word and the whole phrase as a result. Hammond, like all gospel singers, makes a series of emotional and expressive decisions – subconsciously or deliberately and improvised at the time of performance – that utilise a number of conventional and non-conventional techniques, such as the sustaining of consonants, to create an ever-changing and intensely personal musical expression where the immediacy of communication and connection with the listener is profound.

Interjections and Textual Interpolation

Gospel singers interject acclamatory phrases such as “Hallelujah,” “O Lord,” “Yes Child,” to punctuate the natural call and response structure of the gospel song. Interjections are rhythmically significant and allow the gospel singer to emphasise or add their “agreement” to a preceding lyric phrase. Additionally, gospel singers use interjections to connect lyric lines or reinterpret and personalise lyrics in a song. Bishop Paul Morton demonstrates this technique in “God Is A Good God,” where he punctuates the original chorus lyric “God is a good God and He’s worthy to be praised” with the connective and acclamatory interjections notated in Figure 66 (see also CD-E: 73).

Figure 66: Interjection – Bishop Paul S. Morton, “God Is A Good God.”

CD-E: Tr. 73

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It features four vocal parts: Solo, Soprano, Alto, and Tenor. The lyrics are as follows:

Solo:
 8 God is a good God
 2
 3
 4

Soprano:
 Wor - thy to be praised

Alto:
Response
 Wor - thy to be praised

Tenor:
 Wor - thy to be praised

Section 1 (Measures 5-8):

T. (Tenor):
 5 (a) God is a g.
 6 (b) and He's
 7
 8 (c) Oh God

S. 1 (Soprano):
 God is a good God and He's wor - thy to be praised

A. (Alto):
 God is a good God and He's wor - thy to be praised

T. (Tenor):
 God is a good God and He's wor - thy to be praised

Section 2 (Measures 9-12):

T. (Tenor):
 9
 10
 11 (d) Yes He is.
 12 (e) God is

S. 1 (Soprano):
 God is a good God and He's wor - thy to be praised

A. (Alto):
 God is a good God and He's wor - thy to be praised

T. (Tenor):
 God is a good God and He's wor - thy to be praised

Figure 66: Interjection – Bishop Paul S. Morton, “God Is A Good God,” (cont.)

The musical score is for the song "God Is A Good God" by Bishop Paul S. Morton. It features four vocal parts: Tenor (T.), Soprano 1 (S. 1), Alto (A.), and Tenor (T.). The lyrics are: "God is a good God and He's wor - thy to be__ praised__". An interjection box is shown above the Soprano 1 part, containing the lyrics "Yes He is." and a musical notation for a triplet of eighth notes (f) with an upward slide.

Morton begins the song in call and response style with the opening line “God is a good God,” following this with a series of interjections in bar 5 (a), “God is a g” (truncation of the final word “good”); bar 6 (b), “and He’s”; bar 8 (c), “Oh God”; bar 10 (d), “Yes He is”; bar 12 (e), “God is”; and bar 14 (f), “Yes He is.” The function of these interjections varies from a more accompanying-style of “God is a g” at (a), to the emphatic declamatory style of “Yes He is” at (d) and (f), where each interjection is further emphasised with the use of a preceding upward slide and heavy gravel timbre.

Mahalia Jackson further illustrates this technique with her interjection “well, well, well” in “He’s Right On Time” (CD-E: Tr. 74) and “hallelujah” in “Elijah Rock” (CD-E: Tr. 75), and James Cleveland uses an emphatic “hallelujah” in “Jesus Is The Best Thing” (CD-E: Tr. 76) which he follows with a succession of increasingly

intense interjections including “Can I get a witness up here?” which has become a favourite catch-cry for preachers and singers alike.

Boyer describes “textual interpolation” as the “adding of extra words to the original text. These additions may complement the text or may be completely unrelated...”²¹⁷

He further describes the way in which this technique makes use of rhyming couplets and quatrains, a practice common in the performance of Negro spirituals; “ ... group[s] of rhyming couplets are catalogued and when a variety of text or words for a contrasting section are needed, the singer selects an appropriate or favourite couplet and inserts it into the song.”²¹⁸ In addition to the examples of common couplets that Boyer provides (Figure 67), Marion Williams from the Ward Singers adds couplets at the conclusion of “Surely God Is Able” (Figure 68) in a recording that was to firmly entrench the use of rhyming couplets in gospel performance practice (CD-E: Tr. 77).

Figure 67: Rhyming Couplets – Boyer Examples.²¹⁹

- L1 I went in the valley, I didn’t go to stay,
- L2 My soul got happy and I stayed all day

- L3 If you get to heaven before I do,
- L4 Look out for me ‘cause I’m coming too.

²¹⁷ Boyer, “Contemporary Gospel Music,” 108.

²¹⁸ Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 109.

²¹⁹ Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 109.

Figure 68: Rhyming Couplets – The Ward Singers “Surely God Is Able.”
CD-E: Tr. 77

- L1 And Ezekiel’s wheel turning,
- L2 He was Moses’ bush burning.
- L3 He’s your joy when you’re in sorrow,
- L4 He’s your hope for tomorrow.
- L7 He’s gonna step down in before you
- L8 In the judgement, He’s got to know you.

Finally, I participated in a recording of the Gospel Music Workshop of America conference choir in Cincinnati 1997, and the title track from this album, “In Time He’ll Bring You Out” (CD-E: Tr. 78) with soloist James Bignon, illustrates the use of a rhyming couplet, along with several interpolations, in the context of a contemporary gospel song (Figure 69).

Figure 69: Rhyming Couplet – GMWA Choir, “In Time He’ll Bring You Out.”
CD-E: Tr. 78

- L1 He’ll lift you up, He’ll turn you ‘round (Couplet 1a)
- L2 He’ll plant your feet on solid ground (Couplet 1b)
- L3 Hallelujah, hold on
- L4 Why don’t you tell your neighbour, got-ta hold on
- L5 Hold on don’t let go
- L6 Jesus saves,
- L7 He’ll make a way

Structures In Gospel Music, Improvisation and Accompaniment

The Immediate Reprise and the Praise Break

More a structural device than a vocal technique, the immediate reprise occurs after the conclusion of a song where, in response to audience affirmation or the emotional intensity experienced by the performers, the gospel singer “reprises” or repeats a section of that same song – a verse, chorus or often the additional vamp chorus. The immediate reprise can take more time to perform than the initial song itself, as the singers and musicians are “carried away by the spirit” in a state of musical and spiritual trance-like ecstasy. The reprise also effectively functions as another means of “emphasis,” here emphasising and affirming the perceived emotional and psycho-spiritual state of the “community” – performers and audience/congregation together – that has found expression in the particular performance of a gospel song. Richard Smallwood uses this technique in “Total Praise” following the emotive “Amen” chorus where, following the audience’s applause, he immediately reprises the “B” section (“you are the source of my strength”) and the concluding “Amen” chorus or “C” section as well (CD-E: Tr. 79).

Additionally, Kirk Franklin twice reprises the vamp chorus at the end of “It’s Rainin’” (CD-E: Tr. 80), and Dorothy Norwood and the Northern Californian Mass Choir reprise the chorus of “Victory Is Mine” (CD-E: Tr. 81) after Norwood employs several interjections (“hallelujah,” “glory be to God”) and improvisational, preacher-like contextual testimony (“when I got up this morning, when I got up this morning, you know what I said?”). Norwood’s technique here is also indicative of the “praise break,” a gospel singing technique that incorporates song-speech, interjections and

other improvisational devices which generally occur at the conclusion of a song where the singer and instrumentalists perform an improvisational song “in the spirit” – the same heightened emotional and psycho-spiritual state that can precede the immediate reprise. In the case of the praise break, however, the response is less organised and more frenetic, often chaotic and ecstatic. The whole community – singers, instrumentalists and congregation – respond collectively but with individualised physical movements (jumping, running, kneeling, chest-beating, hand-raising), verbal and sung praises and acclamations and, if instruments are present, instrumental accompaniment that either follows a prescribed chord sequence and feel, or one that is initially improvised and then organised as the praise break develops. Kirk Franklin demonstrates the praise break at the conclusion of “Don’t Take Your Joy Away” where the soloist improvises short, shouted phrases of gravel toned interjections over a sustained F⁷ chord (including additional harmonic inflections – see Chapter 3) that finally modulates to Ab major and then merges into the praise break that is, in this case, based on the traditional gospel song “When I Think About Jesus” (CD-E: Tr. 82). Hezekiah Walker’s recording of James Cleveland’s “Lord Do It” also develops into an “under-the-spirit” praise break that plays for as long as the song itself (CD-E: Tr. 83).

Improvisation

One of the many significant contributions that African American culture has made to contemporary music in general has been the reintroduction of improvisation and its foundational primacy in music performance practice. Eileen Southern draws our attention to the importance of improvisation within early African American history, quoting firstly from a journal by Nicholas Cresswell, written in 1774:

The singing at Cresswell's 'Negro Ball' reflects the African propensity for musical improvisation. The singers vied with one another in poking fun at their masters . . . making up their verses as they sang and each trying to outdo the previous singer.²²⁰

Additionally, Southern also quotes William Faux who, writing in 1820, described the spontaneous and improvisatory style of worship that he encountered in a African Methodist Episcopal church:

After sermon [the African Americans] began singing merrily, and continued, without stopping, one hour, till they became exhausted and breathless. "Oh! Come to Zion, come!" "Hallelujah, &c." And then, "O won't you have my lovely bleeding *Jasus*," a thousand times repeated in full thundering chorus to the tune of "Fol de rol." While all the time they were clapping hands, shouting and jumping, and exclaiming, "Ah Lord! Good Lord! Give me *Jasus*! Amen." ²²¹

Many of the gospel singing techniques examined in this exegesis could, conceivably, be "studied" by prospective gospel singers as a jazz saxophonist might study, for example, Niehaus.²²² However, they are ultimately only a means by which the gospel singer uses melodic and rhythmic improvisation to articulate musical and spiritual expression. Although lyrics, melodic, rhythmic and harmonic structures are

²²⁰ Southern, *The Music Of Black Americans*, 48.

²²¹ William Faux, *Memorable Days in America* (London, 1823), 420. Quoted by Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 78.

²²² Originally composer and arranger for the Stan Kenton Big Band, Lennie Niehaus today also writes music for film including the Clint Eastwood directed "Bird" – the story of Charlie Parker – as well as having produced one of the most influential style and technique guides for jazz saxophone. Whilst the 'in the moment' elements of improvisation are common to both gospel and jazz, the body of research that now exists within the jazz genre – particularly for harmonic, melodic, rhythmic and structural elements – is significant, as is the expectation that this same body of knowledge is to be understood and "known" by the jazz player.

prescribed and even rehearsed, these musical fundamentals are subservient to the expressive, the spiritual and to the music and emotion created “in the moment.” Every aspect of the gospel singer’s performance is to an extent improvised; every element is open to significant change, interpretation, reinterpretation and recontextualisation based on the performer’s desire and intent, the audience’s reactions and interaction, and the move and often indefinable influence of the “Spirit”; and all of this is informed by the defining, self-sustaining and all-encompassing deeply embedded cultural trace. Mahalia Jackson’s many recordings of “Down By The Riverside” provide excellent illustrations of the improvisational variations that can typically be found between the various performances of a gospel song, and Figure 70 (CD-E: Tr. 84) and Figure 71 (CD-E: Tr. 85) transcribe two different performances of this song by Jackson recorded during the early 1960s in America (A) and Europe (B) respectively.

Figure 70: Mahalia Jackson, “Down By The Riverside”: A (U.S.A.)
CD-E: Tr. 84

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of a single melodic line. The lyrics are: "Gon-na put on my long white robe down by the riv-er side down by the riv-er side gon-na put on my (long) white robe down by the riv-er side stud y - in war no more Well I ain't go". The score is divided into six sections labeled (a) through (f). Section (a) is marked *mp* and section (b) is marked *p*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Figure 71: Mahalia Jackson, “Down By The Riverside”: B (Europe)
CD-E: Tr. 85

The musical score is written in 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are: "I'm gon-na lay down my sword 'n' shield down by the riv-er side gon-na lay down my sword 'n' shield down by the riv-er side gon-na _stir- dy y' know war no more Well I ain't go". The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings (mp, p). Specific sections are labeled (a) through (f).

Both Figure 70 and Figure 71 are transcriptions of Jackson’s first verse, the different lyrics resulting from a swap in the order of the verses (“gonna put on my long white robe” and “gonna lay down my sword and shield”). Although the general melodic direction and rhythmic intention are the same, the specific melodic and rhythmic order of the notes is quite different as bars 4 and 5, 8 and 9 clearly demonstrate. Jackson adopts a slower, more measured tempo for the European performance (CD-E: Tr. 86) and matches this with a generally louder dynamic and a more emphatic and precise articulation. In the American performance (CD-E: Tr. 85) Jackson contains her energy and vitality to a degree, employing a softer dynamic and a slightly gentler rhythmic swing, even losing the occasional word to her expression of the rhythmic feel (Figure 70 bar 11, “long”).

In addition, and just as significantly, is the way in which Jackson's improvised placement and use of gospel singing techniques also define the individual character of each performance of the song. Figure 71 evidences Jackson's greater use of passing tones (*a*), neighbour tones (*d*) and slightly more rhythmically complex phrasing in general at (*a*), (*b*), (*c*) and (*d*) when compared to the corresponding bars and letters in Figure 70. Figure 70 delivers a slightly faster less melodically ornate interpretation, with greater emphasis on the shaping of notes with bends and slides (Figure 70, bars 6 and 7) and truncated note values ("long white robe," Figure 70 bar 3).

Contemporary gospel singer Fred Hammond further develops the concept of improvisation in gospel in "You Are The Living Word" (CD-E: Tr. 86) where he uses interjections and song-speech ("now let's call Him one more time," "Jesus") and sustained non textual vocal sounds ("whoa, oh") to create a more complex and intricate improvised melodic line; leading, prompting responding and interweaving with the choir and band.

Finally, LaKeisha Grady takes the notion of improvisation in gospel one significant step further in her performance of "He Loves Me" (CD-E: Tr. 87), echoing the expressive melodic inventions of jazz greats like Cassandra Wilson and Dianne Reeves. Grady combines lyric and vocalese²²³ over a Kirk Franklin gospel song that is

²²³ Grove Music Online defines vocalese as: "A term for the practice of jazz singing in which texts (newly invented) are set to recorded jazz improvisations. The word is a pun on the term "vocalise," combining the ideas of a jazz "vocal" and a private language (indicated by the suffix "-ese"). Eddie Jefferson performed vocalese from the 1940s, but the best-known early recordings were made by King Pleasure, including his version of Jefferson's Moody's Mood for Love (1952, Prst. 924), based on a saxophone solo by James Moody, and his own setting of Parker's Mood (1953, Prst. 880), using Charlie Parker's blues improvisation of that title. Other important practitioners of vocalese were Dave Lambert, Annie Ross, and above all Jon Hendricks, who was extremely inventive in creating texts to capture the feeling of the original solos. In 1957 Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross (later Yolande Bavan) formed a vocal trio which attained some commercial success with their vocalese; it disbanded in 1964, but Hendricks continued to create and perform such pieces into the 1980s with a group comprising

heavily influenced by jazz harmonic and rhythmic concepts and reflects the trend in contemporary gospel to search for new ideas and find inspiration in other musical genres beyond its traditional boundaries.

Gospel Piano Accompaniment

As gospel music has developed, “the piano has become the principal accompanying instrument,”²²⁴ and the gospel pianists employ several key idiomatic stylistic features that have come to characterise this unique style of accompaniment. The gospel piano style was directly informed by the vocal performance practices of the gospel singers, favoured because of its ability to produce the full range from lyrical to aggressively percussive tones that could support and complement the extremes of physical and musical expression of the gospel singer.

The use of the piano for accompaniment in gospel music developed along with the rise of gospel music in the Pentecostal religious movement from as early as 1920,²²⁵ but was not a stable component of gospel until the 1930s, where a distinct style of gospel piano emerged based on the concept of the “rhythm section”²²⁶ employed by

members of his family. Although the singing of vocalese is most closely associated with the bop style, it was also practiced later by such popular singers as the Pointer Sisters, the vocal quartet Manhattan Transfer (Vocalese, 1985, Atl. 81266), and New York Voices.”

J. Bradford Robinson/Barry Kernfeld, “Vocalese,” Grove Music Online ed. L. Macy (Accessed [17/5/2007]), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

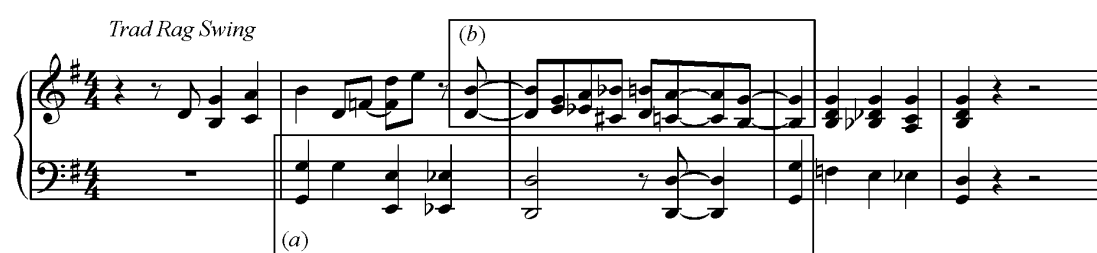
²²⁴ Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 22.

²²⁵ In the original COGIC/COC (Holiness) division, Charles Price Jones didn’t believe in the use of instruments in worship at all, basing his theology on the literal accounts of New Testament early church practice where musical instruments were not used. Charles Harrison Mason favoured the use of musical instruments however, and exerted a significant influence on the development of gospel music as a result.

²²⁶ The “rhythm section concept” is a term first used by Horace Boyer in his article “Contemporary Gospel Music.” The rhythm section instrumentalists (drums, bass, guitar/banjo, piano and later, vibes) improvised their music around specific musical guidelines – a chord chart, a specified groove – and within clearly defined contextual parameters that were “known” but certainly not notated. The objective of these parameters was to ensure that whilst improvising the “accompanying” chords, feels and melodies/counter melodies, the texture of sound produced from the rhythm section did not become so dense, ornate or polyphonically complex that it detracted from the melodic content of the song

early blues and jazz musicians. The first acknowledged gospel pianist was Arizona Dranes, whose playing style in the early 1920s Boyer describes as a “combination of ragtime, with its two beats to the bar feel, octave passages in the left hand, exaggerated syncopation in the right hand, and heavy full and ragged (syncopated) chords of barrelhouse piano, and the more traditional chords of the standard Protestant hymn.”²²⁷ Dranes’ piano introduction for the Texas Jubilee singers in “He’s Coming Soon” (Figure 72 and CD-E: Tr. 88) illustrates her use of left-hand octaves (a), ragtime influenced syncopation (b) and a general focus on the middle register of the piano that were to become significant characteristics of the gospel piano style.

Figure 72: Piano Accompaniment – Arizona Dranes, “He’s Coming Soon.”
CD-E: Tr. 88



In Dranes’ 1928 recording, “I Shall Wear A Crown” (Figure 73 and CD-E: Tr. 89), Boyer further describes her technique of incorporating the melodic notes into the right-hand chord structures, not playing a distinct “melody” line with the right hand, but rather using “chords which support the melody, a practice still observed in contemporary gospel piano.”²²⁸ He also describes her use of simple harmonic

played by the “front line” instruments. Therefore, conceptually, each instrument was assigned a particular rhythmic, harmonic and melodic function that in general terms was understood by all rhythm section instrumentalists.

²²⁷ Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 37-38.

²²⁸ Boyer, “Contemporary Gospel Music,” 32.

structures, illustrated here in Figure 73 (a), as well as repetitive, right-hand eighth-note chords to create a sense of perpetual forward motion (b) and (c), and the heavily syncopated rhythms (d) and stride left hand (e) typical of ragtime piano.²²⁹

Figure 73: Piano Accompaniment – Arizona Dranes, “I Shall Wear a Crown.”
CD-E: Tr. 89

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has four measures. The right hand (RH) in measures 1 and 3 has eighth-note chords, labeled (b) and (c) respectively. The left hand (LH) in measures 1 and 3 has a single note, labeled (a) F. The second system has four measures. The RH in measures 1 and 3 has eighth-note chords, labeled (d) and (e) respectively. The LH in measures 1 and 3 has a single note, labeled (a) B^b. The LH in measures 2 and 4 has a single note, labeled (a) F.

Roberta Martin later brought a more refined approach to gospel piano, building on many of Dranes’ techniques, notably employing right hand chord voicings that supported and usually contained the notes of melody. Martin, however, also incorporated richer harmonic textures, single note and octave melodic runs that punctuated the vocal phrases, and percussive “bombs” – loud, percussive and unexpected single octave bass explosions within an otherwise softer dynamic (CD-E: Tr. 90 and 91). Clara Ward and James Cleveland were also influential in the

²²⁹ “Stride” accompaniment is a technique where in 4/4 metre the bass note alternates between the 1st and the 5th scale degrees of a specified chord type on beats 1 and 3 respectively, whilst an appropriately voiced chord is placed on beats 2 and 4.

development of the gospel piano style; Ward began using the IV chord as a passing chord over tonic harmony (CD-E: Tr. 92), which Boyer describes as “more a rhythmic inflection than tonal [that] contributed to the development of a faster harmonic rhythm in the style,”²³⁰ and Cleveland used extremes of dynamic range and rhythmic accentuations over the full range of the keyboard to meld with his preaching-singing style (CD-E: Tr. 93).

The gospel piano style uses the lower extremities of the keyboard in the left hand to function as an upright bass or tuba might in a traditional jazz band. Placing tonic notes in octaves on beats 1 and 3 in 4/4 meter, and alternating with the dominant or other passing tones on beats 2 and 4, the left hand bass pattern underpins the essential harmony and feel. The right hand is focussed mostly in the middle range of the piano, alternating between on-beat playing and syncopated, ragtime-like rhythms that support the vocal line in the chordal harmony, with the “melody” placed within the chord voicing, usually on the top. Both of these techniques are used by Mahalia Jackson’s long-time accompanist Mildred Falls in “He’s Right On Time” (Figure 74 and CD-E: Tr. 94), who also demonstrates the use of a brass-like, octave excursion into the upper register, carefully placed in the spaces between verse lines and individual phrases, that often functioned as the “response” to the singer’s “call” in the call and response style (Figure 75, bar 2 (*a*)).

²³⁰ Boyer, “Contemporary Gospel Music,” 33.

Figure 74: Gospel Piano – Mildred Falls, “He’s Right On Time.”
CD-E: Tr. 94



Figure 75: Gospel Piano – Mildred Falls, “He’s Right On Time.”
CD-E: Tr. 94



In “Bless The Lord” (CD-E: Tr. 95) contemporary gospel singer, composer and pianist Richard Smallwood demonstrates the way in which gospel piano players tend to keep the vocal melody and choir parts in the right-hand piano voicings (letters (a), (c), (e) and (f) of Figure 76) as well as supplying a brass-like, descending “response” to the gospel singer’s “call” (letters (b) and (d) of Figure 76).

Figure 76: Gospel Piano – Richard Smallwood, “Bless The Lord.”²³¹
CD-E: Tr. 95

The musical score is for the song "Bless The Lord" by Richard Smallwood. It is written for piano and voice. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 4. The second system contains measures 5 through 8. The piano part is written in the left hand, and the vocal part is written in the right hand. The lyrics are: "Bless the Lord oh my soul, and all that is with - in me." Annotations (a) through (f) are placed above the vocal staff, indicating specific musical phrases or techniques. Annotation (a) is above "Bless the Lord", (b) is above "oh my soul,", (c) is above "oh my soul,", (d) is above "and all", (e) is above "and all", and (f) is above "that is with - in me." The piano part includes a dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte) at the beginning of the first system.

More recently, contemporary gospel pianists have incorporated more advanced harmonic and rhythmic concepts into their gospel piano style. Kirk Franklin’s gospel piano style in “He Loves Me” (CD-E: Tr. 96) borrows voicings, harmonic structures and the concept and stylistic execution of the improvised piano solo from Jazz, and Bobby Sparks gospel piano playing on Fred Hammond’s “Keep On Praisin’” reflects the influences of the jazz-funk and jazz-rock hybrid styles in his choice of voicings, groove and in his use of an electronic keyboard (CD-E: Tr. 97). The harmonic language of jazz and the new African American genres of Funk, Rap and urban R & B, have significantly influenced some of the most recent developments in gospel

²³¹ Richard Smallwood, *Adoration: Live In Atlanta With Vision* (Warner Bros. Publications, 1996).

music. However, the depth of research and performance practice related to these vast areas for the most part falls outside the scope of this exegesis.

Concluding Comments

Although no two gospel performances will ever be exactly alike, this in itself is not unique in that such a claim could also be made of classical singing performance in the European tradition.²³² However, the degree of individual interpretative flexibility and possibility that is afforded the gospel singer is substantial and ultimately definitive of the gospel style itself. A gospel singer must be able to identify with and articulately express not only the emotion and passion of the gospel song, he/she must employ as many of the vast array of gospel singing techniques as they are able to create an intensely personal and emotional expression that will enable the performance to resonate with and fully engage the audience for whom it is performed. The gospel singer is heart, soul and voice; skilled technician, musician, exhorter, intercessor, confessor and preacher. As James Franklin says, the gospel singer is one who ties together the threads of shared experience.

[Aretha Franklin] does with her voice exactly what a preacher does with his when he *moans* to congregation. That moan strikes a responsive chord in the congregation and somebody answers you back with their own moan, which means I know what you're moaning about because I feel the same way. So you have something sort of like a thread spinning out and touching and tying

²³² For further analytical comparison, additional performances of "Down By The Riverside" by Mahalia Jackson can be accessed on the internet site "You Tube" at the following addresses: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqvBnvqJON4> , and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehrvRw6_sRs&mode=related&search=

[sic] everybody together in a shared experience just like getting happy and shouting together in church.²³³

Integral to this “shared experience” is an implicit emotional, cultural and spiritual understanding of the techniques used by gospel singers by the audience, and it is this “understanding” of cultural memory, the deeply embedded cultural trace, that ultimately unlocks the musical codes within the music that enables it to fully resonate with the listener. In performance, the gospel singer is able to manipulate timbre, pitch, rhythm and even structural elements within the music to such a degree that the traditional boundaries between performer and composer no longer meaningfully exist. Each new performance is improvised or “instantaneously composed,” and, although many of these gospel techniques are in fact also present to varying degrees within other world cultures, such is the centrality of this concept to African American gospel that the songs themselves are defined as much by the performer and individual performances as they are by the composer and the song itself.

²³³ James Franklin as quoted by Charles Sanders in “Aretha,” *Ebony* Dec 1971, 124-34.

CHAPTER 3

Comparative Musical Analysis of Three Iconic Gospel Recordings

Context for Musical Analysis

The gospel ensemble “The Southern Gospel Choir” draw their repertoire almost exclusively from the African American gospel music tradition and, in addition to songs by Fred Hammond and Kirk Franklin, their 2006 debut CD *Great Day* featured the traditional “How I Got Over” by Clara Ward, a gospelized rendition of the Spafford/Bliss hymn “It Is Well” that was examined in Chapter 2 (see pages 112-118), and Richard Smallwood’s “Great Day.” In evidence in these recordings are many of the moans, screams and shouts, gospel grupettos and other stylistic and improvisatory techniques foundational to African American gospel music. However, the Southern Gospel Choir is an Australian ensemble. With a current membership of over one hundred singers and including a professional gospel band of ten musicians, the SGC has experienced significant success within Australia and has become one of the most recognizable, loved and iconic Tasmanian institutions.²³⁴ The SGC membership, like its audience, is drawn from a wide cross-section of the Tasmanian community, many of whom are not affiliated with any traditional Christian or other religious institution, and currently none are of African American descent. The significant cultural touchstones of the African American community appear to have little obvious connection with Australian geographically-specific cultural traditions. However, in what Gayle Wald refers to as “a complex process of cultural re-

²³⁴ The SGC consistently attract audiences in excess of 800 to their feature concert series in June and November each year; they have been invited to perform for the international festival *10 Days On The Island* on three separate occasions; the SGC debut album *Great Day* was nominated for an ARIA (Australian Recording Industry Award) in October 2006 in the “World Music Category.”

signification,”²³⁵ African American gospel music does indeed appear to have crossed some significant boundaries, finding a resonance and context within the Australian community.

The Southern Gospel Choir recordings on *Great Day* are based almost exclusively on specific recordings of those songs by African American gospel artists, and the following detailed comparative analysis will illuminate the essential elements of this cultural and musical “crossing over,” and the effect that this has had on the musical performance itself.

Comparative Musical Analysis – “How I Got Over.”

Based on a Negro Spiritual, Clara Ward originally wrote and recorded “How I Got Over” for the Vanguard label in the early 1960s. However, the version that the SGC based their performance on was recorded by Aretha Franklin, James Cleveland and the Southern California Community Choir for the 1972 live album, *Amazing Grace*, released on the Atlantic label (CD-A: Tr. 3). My arrangement of this song for the SGC (CD-A: Tr. 4) was transcribed predominantly from the Cleveland/Franklin original recording, and included a choir score (Figure 77) and a band chord chart only (Figure 78).

²³⁵ Wald, “From Spirituals To Swing,” 387-416.

Figure 77: “How I Got Over,” Legg SGC Choir Arrangement 1.

How I Got Over

Clara Ward
arranged by James Cleveland

Chorus 1

SOP How I got o - ver_ how I got o - ver_

ALTO How I got o - ver_ how I got o - ver_

TENOR How I got o - ver_ how I got o - ver_

5

S. 1 soul looks back and won - ders at how I got o - - ver!

S. 2 soul looks back and won - ders at how I got o - - ver!

T. soul looks back and won - ders at how I got o - - ver!

8

9 *Verse*

S. 1 Oh yes, oh yes oh yes

S. 2 Oh yes, oh yes oh yes

T. Oh yes, oh yes oh yes

13

S. 1 oh yes oh yes oh yes oh yes

S. 2 oh yes oh yes oh yes oh yes

T. oh yes oh yes oh yes oh yes

Figure 77: (cont) “How I Got Over,” Legg SGC Choir Arrangement 2.

2

17

S. 1 Hal - le - lu - jah!_ Trou - bles o - ver.

S. 2 Hal - le - lu - jah!_ Trou - bles o - ver.

T. Hal - le - lu - jah!_ Trou - bles o - ver.

21

S. 1 Thank Je - sus for all He's done for me_____

S. 2 Thank Je - sus for all He's done for me_____

T. Thank Je - sus for all He's done for me_____

25 Chorus 2

S. 1 O - - ver,___ o - - ver,___

S. 2 O - - ver,___ o - - ver,___

T. O - - ver,___ o - - ver,___

Figure 77: (cont) “How I Got Over,” Legg SGC Choir Arrangement 3.

3

29

S. 1 soul looks back and won - ders at how I got - ta o - ver.____

S. 2 soul looks back and won - ders at how I got - ta o - ver.____

T. soul looks back and won - ders at how I got - ta o - ver.____

33 *Vamp*

S. 1 Thank Him, thank the Lord.

S. 2 Thank Him, thank the Lord.

T. Thank Him, thank the Lord.

Figure 78: “How I Got Over,” SGC Band Chart.

HOW I GOT OVER - BAND CHART

IN

9 CHORUS 1

17 VERSE

25 PRE CHORUS

33 CHORUS 2

VAMP

F F B^b B⁰ F/C D⁹ G⁷ B^b/C B^b F

F F B^b B⁰ F/C D⁷ G⁷ B^b/C B^b F

F F F F B^b B^b F F

F F B^b B⁰ F/C D⁷ G⁷ C⁷ B^b F

F C/E C/E E^b D⁷ D⁷ Gmi⁷ Gmi F/A Gmi/B^b F/C F/C B^b F F F

Gospel Piano – Cleveland and Legg

In the original version, Cleveland establishes the tempo and stylistic “feel” for the song with the piano introduction, and although the song has obviously been rehearsed, his technique, dynamic level and rhythmic organization at this point provide him with the means to establish his musical and expressive intentions for this particular performance (Figure 79 and CD-E2: Tr. 1).²³⁶

Figure 79: “How I Got Over,” Cleveland gospel piano introduction.
CD-E2: Tr. 1



²³⁶ Interpretations of gospel songs can vary depending on the mood, sensitivity and spiritual responsiveness of the soloist, musical director, or the audience/congregation themselves. Every aspect of a song’s construction is open to interpretation including key, tempo, dynamic level, tonality, and even melodic and rhythmic components. The re-issue of the album *Amazing Grace* – including the track “How I Got Over” – provides a unique insight into this. It contains all the music recorded by Cleveland, Franklin and SCCC across two separate nights, with many of the songs being featured on both nights. For example, on each night we hear a very different interpretation of the song “Precious Memories” where Cleveland commences one version with dialogue, bringing in the choir at a very slow tempo, a very soft dynamic, and with a late entry. With the alternate performance, the choir entry is precise and strong, beginning at a faster tempo with an increased dynamic level. The intensity and general effect of each song is distinctly different and the whole process is indicative of the improvisational, interpretative and responsive control that pianist, conductor and gospel singer can have over the musical delivery and even construction of a gospel song.

Cleveland's playing incorporates elements of the "rhythm section" style of gospel piano, concentrating the essential harmony in the middle of the keyboard at letters (*c*) and (*f*), supported by octave left hand bass notes at letter (*e*), – including a subtle "bomb" at letter (*b*) – and brass-like octave descending and ascending runs in the right hand in the upper register of the piano at letters (*a*) and (*d*). Cleveland's playing also contains incidental pitch errors (*X*), some instances where the harmonic direction is a little blurred by overuse of the sustain pedal, and a degree of extraneous mechanical noise and string rattle produced by the considerable physical pressure that Cleveland exerts on the piano itself. Given the context of the "live recording" and the fact that Cleveland has to play and conduct at the same time, it could be argued that minor technical flaws within the overall performance are to be somewhat expected. However, rather than detracting from the performance, these unintentional "errors" actually contribute to the overriding sense of passion that Cleveland generates even within the opening few measures of his performance, where technical proficiency is subjugated to emotional expressiveness.

My introduction (Figure 80 and CD-E: Tr. 2), whilst also focussing on the middle registers of the piano (*a*), employs a generally more precise articulation and throughout.

Figure 80: “How I Got Over,” Legg gospel piano introduction.
CD-E2: Tr. 2



The piano introduction here incorporates Cleveland’s “re-working” concept,²³⁷ drawing on elements of the opening horn riff from James Brown’s original recording of “I Feel Good,” marked here in Figure 80 (a), as well as a traditional jazz piano descending diminished excursion, marked at Figure 80 (c), departing from the octave and single note excursions more common in gospel piano. The two accented left-hand figures at (b) function in a similar manner to the gospel piano “bomb,” and the general feel is more cleanly articulated (using less sustain pedal), particularly in relation to the rhythmic subdivisions (d), producing a “tighter” feel in contrast to Cleveland’s “relaxed” feel.²³⁸

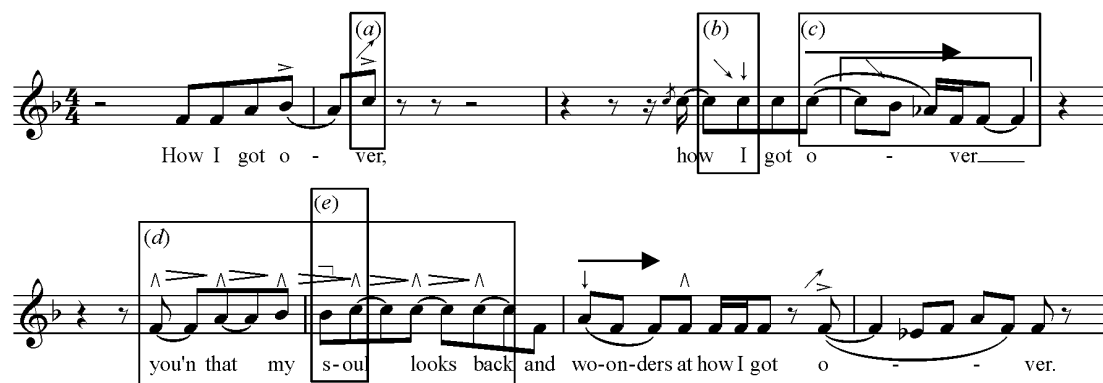
²³⁷ James Cleveland would often interweave musical and textual material from other contemporary musical genres into his gospel compositions. One of his most popular songs, “Jesus Is The Best Thing” is a re-worked version of the Gladys Knight and the Pips tune, “You Are The Best Thing That Ever Happened To Me.” It is an excellent example of the musical “borrowing” that occurs within gospel music, and the concept of “re-working” a song will be examined in detail in chapter 4.

²³⁸ The interpretation of a feel as “tight,” “relaxed” or “loose” does not carry a qualitative imperative, with each designation – and the many alternatives commonly employed by contemporary musicians – functioning purely as a descriptive generic type.

Lead Gospel Vocal – Franklin and Johnson

The first entry of Aretha Franklin’s lead vocal line (CD-E2: Tr. 3) clearly demonstrates several key gospel vocal techniques that immediately inform the listener of Franklin’s obvious gospel heritage (Figure 81).²³⁹

Figure 81: “How I Got Over,” Aretha Franklin opening bars.
CD-E2: Tr. 3



In the first phrase of Figure 81, Franklin uses a rapid lower neighbour followed by an upward slide to the destination note (a). She articulates the feel for this song using a subtle variation in emphasis, stressing both the Bbs in bar 2, finally adding additional emphasis to the destination note (a) on the end of the slide. The placement of this emphasis here in turn adds emphasis to the syncopation of the vocal line and the unique rhythmic character that it brings to the phrase. The following bars illustrate some of the complexity of Franklin’s gospel singing style as she incorporates slides and flattened tones (b), a vowel change across a descending gospel grupetto and glide, added emphasis of the delayed lyrics and a truncation of the words “you know” to

²³⁹ The initial loss of definition of the opening lyric “how” and the generally lower level of the main vocal part in the first chorus line in relation to the choir and band levels are more by-products of the vagaries of the “live” recording environment common at this time.

“you’n” (*d*), and an emphasised and elongated consonant “s” (*e*). Figure 82 highlights bars 5 through 7, illustrating the way in which Franklin syncopates, delays (*a*) and finally truncates (*c*) the delivery of the lyric line. Additionally in Figure 82, we can see how Franklin adds a slight diminuendo after each of the main syncopated tones (*b*), producing the same effect as a rhythmic breath even though she does not in fact break the phrase. The diminuendos create dynamic “holes” in the phrase that produce a rhythmic “bounce,” giving added emphasis to each syncopated tone/syllable in the sequence and providing significant forward momentum for the essential rhythmic character of the vocal line.

Figure 82: “How I Got Over,” Aretha Franklin; opening bars 5 – 7 only.
CD-E2: Tr. 3

The musical score for "How I Got Over" by Aretha Franklin, showing the opening bars 5 through 7. The score is written for Lead Vocal and Choir. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The Lead Vocal part is on a treble clef staff, and the Choir part is on a bass clef staff. The lyrics are: "you'n that my s - oul looks back and wo - on - ders at how I got o -". The score includes several annotations: (a) for delay, (b) for syncopation, and (c) for truncation. A box labeled (b) is above the first staff, showing a series of slanted lines representing syncopation. A box labeled (a) is below the first staff, showing a series of slanted lines representing delay. A box labeled (c) is above the second staff, showing a series of slanted lines representing truncation. The score also includes a box labeled (a) cont. below the first staff, showing a series of slanted lines representing delay. The score includes a box labeled (a) cont. below the first staff, showing a series of slanted lines representing delay. The score includes a box labeled (a) cont. below the first staff, showing a series of slanted lines representing delay.

Alexandra Johnson’s opening phrase for the Southern Gospel Choir’s “How I Got Over” provides a marked contrast to Franklin’s, particularly in her use of articulation,

rhythmic breathing and placement of gospel singing techniques (Figure 83 and CD-E2: Tr. 4).

Figure 83: “How I Got Over,” Alexandra Johnson opening bars.
CD-E2: Tr. 4

The figure displays three staves of musical notation for the song "How I Got Over" by Alexandra Johnson. The notation is in 4/4 time and includes lyrics underneath the notes. Annotations are used to highlight specific singing techniques:

- Staff 1:** The first line of music. A box labeled (a) highlights the note on "ver." with a downward arrow and a symbol indicating a flattened tone. A box labeled (b) highlights the notes on the second line, "o - - ver.", with a curved arrow indicating a slide or falsetto-like tone.
- Staff 2:** The second line of music. It includes the lyrics "You know" and "my soul looks back and". A box highlights the notes on "my soul looks back and" with downward arrows indicating rhythmic emphasis.
- Staff 3:** The third line of music. A box labeled (c) cont. highlights the notes on "won - ders at how I got o," with a curved arrow indicating a slide or falsetto-like tone. The second part of the staff shows the notes on "o - - ver." with a curved arrow indicating a slide or falsetto-like tone.

Johnson’s voice benefits from a generally improved recording environment in purely sonic terms,²⁴⁰ and her performance, whilst obviously modelled on Franklin’s, is smoother and generally uses less rhythmic emphasis and syncopation. Johnson’s pitch representation is quite similar to Franklin’s, particularly with the gospel grupetto at (b) and the use of the slide on the last quaver of bar 7. Johnson employs a falsetto-like flattened tone at (a) to which she also gives a light emphasis, but it is in the rhythmic construction that the greatest contrast in styles becomes apparent. Johnson’s altogether smoother phrasing lacks the syncopated and dynamic rhythmic singing that

²⁴⁰ Cleveland always preferred the “grittiness” and reality of the live recording, particularly given the significance of audience anticipation and interaction to this genre.

is characteristic of Franklin's performance in general but particularly noticeable at (c). Johnson delays the placement of the notes at this point (behind the choir) as did Franklin, but they lack the same rhythmic attack because she uses a continuous breath that maintains the dynamic throughout this line. Significantly, this does not allow for the "rhythmic holes" present in Franklin's performance which are an important component of rhythmic singing, and integral to her gospel "feel."

The Choirs – the SCCC and the SGC

The choir parts sung by the Southern California Community Choir occasionally lack definition within the overall vocal/instrumental balance, and this is particularly noticeable in the first verse where the choir respond to Franklin's call ("as soon as I see Jesus") with the declamatory phrase "O Yes" (Figure 84 and CD-E2: Tr. 5).

Figure 84: "How I Got Over," SCCC response "O Yes."
CD-E2: Tr. 5

The musical score for "How I Got Over" features Franklin and the SCCC Choir. Franklin's part is in 4/4 time, with lyrics: "Just as soon as I see Je - sus a man who made me free". The Choir's response is "O yes". The score is divided into three sections: (a) Franklin's first line, (b) Choir's first response, and (c) Franklin's second line and Choir's second response.

(a) Franklin's first line: "Just as soon as I see Je - sus a man who made me free". The lyrics are written below the staff. The music is in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "Just as soon as I see Je - sus a man who made me free".

(b) Choir's first response: "O yes". The lyrics are written below the staff. The music is in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "O yes O yes".

(c) Franklin's second line and Choir's second response: "He was a man that bled, and suf- fered. He died for you and for me_". The lyrics are written below the staff. The music is in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "He was a man that bled, and suf- fered. He died for you and for me_".

Using the “strained, full-throated sound” that Boyer describes,²⁴¹ the “O” sound is placed in the middle of the mouth producing a darker tone, where the subsequently shorter “O” merges with the “y” in “yes” (O→Yes), forming a rapid vowel change at (a), (b) and (c) that produces a rhythmic emphasis or “bounce” in the phrase. Cleveland’s arrangement then highlights the rhythmic bounce through the use of repetition where he first doubles (b) and then triples (c) the choir response in the “preaching” style. As a result, the final consonant “s” in each “yes” is dynamically lower and occasionally not audible.

It is during the main chorus sections (Figure 85 and CD-E2: Tr. 6) that the dynamic level and intensity of the choir’s singing increases, particularly as the small variations in the gospel vibrato between the individual choral singers becomes more prominent. This effect significantly colours the choir sound, adding to it a richer and more diverse palette of harmonics, the combination of which has become characteristic of the gospel choir sound.

²⁴¹ Boyer, “Contemporary Gospel Music,” 23.

Figure 85: “How I Got Over,” SCCC Chorus.
CD-E2: Tr. 6

The musical score is for the chorus of "How I Got Over" by the SCCC Chorus. It is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. The score consists of three staves: Soprano, Alto, and Tenor. The lyrics are: "O - - ver, o - - ver, soul looks back and won - ders at how I got - ta o - - ver." A box labeled (a) highlights the word "ta" in the lyrics "got - ta" across all three staves.

The tenors sing with greater energy and at a relatively high tessitura (Fs and Gs), and the ease with which they achieve this particularly powerful sound provides a firm foundation for the upper parts, and the impact of the choir at this point is at its greatest, although their diction remains unclear in places. For example, the “v” in “over” is softened and sometimes difficult to differentiate; the intensity of bars 1 through 4 begins to diminish as the tessitura falls at the end of the phrase and the lyrics become almost indecipherable; and it is difficult to hear precise pitch definition in some places, such as is marked in Figure 85 (a). However, the intended audiences for gospel music do understand the lyrics, partly because the gospel soloist uses improvisations, interjections and textual interpolations to establish the lyric content

and context, and partly because the song, or at least one of its previous incarnations, is already known.

The diction of the Southern Gospel Choir's recorded performance is certainly clearer and more precisely articulated than the SCCC version (Figure 86 and CD-E2: Tr. 7).

Figure 86: "How I Got Over," SGC response "O Yes."
CD-E2: Tr. 7

The musical score is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. It features two parts: SGC (Southern Gospel Choir) and Johnson. The SGC part consists of two staves of chords. The Johnson part is a single staff with a vocal line and lyrics. Annotations (a), (b), and (c) highlight specific vocalizations.

(a) SGC: A box containing a chord (F4, A4, C5) with the text "O yes" below it.

(b) SGC: A box containing two chords (F4, A4, C5) with the text "O yes O yes" below it.

(c) SGC: A box containing three chords (F4, A4, C5) with the text "O yes O yes O yes" below it.

Johnson:

'Cause as soon_ as I_ see_ Je - sus a man who made me_ free

He was a man that bled_ and suf-fered He died for you and for me

The SGC initially place the "O" sound more towards the front of the mouth (a) achieving a more European classical tone, although the subsequent "O" sounds (b) and (c) tend to sound as "Ah" as the choir shorten each subsequent "o" vowel. Additionally, the original vowel change (O→Yes) is not present to any significant degree, and the final consonant "s" is quite sibilant and clear. The phrasing for the SGC choir response is altogether smoother, and the rhythmic bounce so characteristic of the SCCC performance is not as evident.

The dynamic and intensity level of the SGC also rises during the major chorus sections, but their choral sound is more upper-part dominant and much thinner than the SCCC as a result of the lack of power in the tenor section in particular, and the lack of the wider, faster oscillating gospel vibrato in general (Figure 87 and CD-E2: Tr. 8).

Figure 87: “How I Got Over,” SGC Chorus.

CD-E2: Tr. 8

The musical score is written for three voices (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor) in 4/4 time. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 4, and the second system contains measures 5 through 8. The lyrics are: "O - - ver,___ o - - ver___" for measures 1-4, and "soul looks back and won - ders at how I got - ta o - - ver. ___" for measures 5-8. A vertical line labeled (a) is placed between measures 6 and 7. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines.

The diction of the SGC is not particularly clear at this point, with the almost total absence of the “v” in “over” both making the word difficult to understand, and also diffusing the effect of the rhythmic syncopation on the last quaver of bars 1 and 3. The SGC sound each notated pitch as written in this phrase and do not employ a non-

pitched rhythmic emphasis in bar 6 (*a*). The choir's tendency towards a more legato-style phrasing and their lack of gospel vibrato in general also effectively smooths out the phrasing in bars 5 and 6, which diminishes the rhythmic and dynamic impact of section.

The final vamp chorus provides a further illustration of the contrast in style between these two recordings. The musical and spiritual connection between Franklin's improvisatory singing and the choir's repeated vamp ("thank him") is very strong, and Franklin's vocal delivery attains an almost hypnotic quality as she extemporaneously responds to the musical environment as well as her own apparent heightened emotional and spiritual state (Figure 88 and CD-E2 Tr. 9).

Figure 88: "How I Got Over," Franklin and SCCC vamp.
CD-E2: Tr. 9

The musical score is presented in three staves. The top staff, labeled 'Franklin', is in 4/4 time and features a melodic line with lyrics: 'Thank you Lord', 'thank you Je - sus', 'Thank you Lord', and 'thank'. Four specific moments are highlighted with boxes and labels: (a) with an upward arrow, (b) with a downward arrow, (c) with a downward arrow, and (d) with an upward arrow. The middle staff, labeled 'Choir', provides a harmonic accompaniment with lyrics: 'Thank Him', 'thank you Lord', 'Thank Him', and 'thank you Lord'. The bottom staff, labeled 'Clapping', shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes represented by 'x' marks on a five-line staff.

The hypnotic effect is the result of structural, melodic and rhythmic repetition which, when combined with the percussive clapping, the improvised solo voice and call and response singing produces a musical context that is powerfully resonant of the traditional ring shout. As a result of this intense expressive quality, Franklin's diction

is not always clear, dropping the “d” in “Lord” (*a*) and (*d*) and markedly dropping the dynamic level of the syllable “sus” in Jesus (*c*), neither of which however is uncommon African American colloquial pronunciation. Franklin employs an extemporisation and interpolation in the vamp as well as a couplet-like phrase in lines 5 and 6 (Figure 89) which refers directly to the difficulties she had been experiencing in both her popular music career and private life.²⁴²

Figure 89: “How I Got Over,” Franklin’s vamp lyrics.

CD-E2: Tr. 9

- L1 I want to thank Him, thank Him,
- L2 Thank Him, thank you Jesus
- L3 Thank you Lord, thank you Jesus,
- L4 Thank you Lord, thank you Jesus
- L5 You brought me you taught me more
- L6 You helped me when I was left alone
- L7 Oh thank you Jesus thank you Lord
- L8 Thank you Jesus, thank you Lord

By contrast, the vamp performed by the SGC and their soloist does not present or connect these elements in the same manner (Figure 90 and CD-E2: Tr. 10).

²⁴² Aretha Franklin experienced tremendous musical and financial success during the 1960s and as a result of this and her enormous talent she was “unofficially” crowned the “Queen of Soul,” a popularist title that is still applied today. However, her popularity was in serious decline by the beginning of the 1970s where the more aggressive and assertive music of James Brown and the new breed of African American soul singers seemed to better express the mood of the African American community, and where the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, the Vietnam war and the race riots that came into public awareness in the 1960s were all contributing to the often violent re-shaping of developing American culture. Franklin was to a significant degree the embodiment of “old Africa America,” and these values seemed at odds with the mood of an important section of this community at this time and, as a result, her career was in steep decline. James Cleveland, however, organised the *Amazing Grace* concert and recording partly as a means of reintroducing Aretha to the community that had originally given life to her music and her popular singing career, and it is significant that in the vamp section of “How I Got Over” Franklin begins to “sing through” her difficulties and problems in the manner of the deeply embedded cultural traditions of the gospel singer.

Figure 90: “How I Got Over,” Johnson solo and SGC choir response.

CD-E2: Tr. 10

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of two systems. The first system shows Johnson's solo on a single staff and the SGC choir response on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Johnson's lyrics are "I wan - na thank Him" with a melisma on "thank" marked (a). The SGC response is a whole-note chordal accompaniment. The second system continues Johnson's solo with lyrics "the Lord_ Thank the_ Lord_ thank the_ Lord_" and a melisma on "the_ Lord_" marked (c). The SGC response continues with lyrics "Thank Him" and "thank the Lord" marked (d). The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests.

Johnson’s improvisation is musically sensitive, effective and demonstrates considerable vocal agility over an extended pitch range (CD-E2: Tr. 10). It is also in part reflective of my pedagogical technique and significant influence on the development of a gospel singing style and interpretive vocal expression for solo gospel singing within the SGC.²⁴³ However, the studio context, lack of audience interaction and her relative unfamiliarity with African American gospel musical culture and practice produces a more rehearsed and “prepared” vocal extemporisation

²⁴³ In addition to rehearsing and refining the choir’s technique and expression, the author works closely and in detail with each soloist, particularly in relation to their stylistic interpretation of melody, rhythm and “groove” and improvisatory technique. The function that the soloist performs within the SGC is significant, interpreting, heightening and intensifying the choir’s musical expression. However, contextually their function is quite different to that of the African American gospel singer, particularly in reference to the ideologies and practices of Pentecostal Christianity that directly inform African American gospel singing performance practice. The author employs a variety of techniques to assist the soloists to develop their own unique context for interpretive singing, including referencing original African American gospel recordings, re-telling the important stories behind the gospel songs and analysing and recontextualising the lyric content, and by also referencing contemporary secular African American singing styles. Australian contemporary singers in general are able to more effectively access African American gospel singing techniques initially through via the plethora of African American inspired and derived secular singing styles – blues, rhythm & blues, and rock & roll – that also inform Australian popular culture. This process of transculturalisation is central to this exegesis, and is examined in greater detail in chapter four.

that is less spontaneous, less personal and lacking the depth of musical expression and spiritual connection that Franklin exhibits. In Figure 90 we can see how Johnson employs many of the gospel singing techniques including the slide (*a*) and the blue and “flattened” notes of the blues scale at (*a*) and (*b*), (*c*) and (*d*) – borrowed from Franklin’s original flattened tone, Figure 88 (*b*) – although her treatment of the blue note or lowered tone is more a specific tone than the blues inflections employed by Franklin.

Concluding Comments

Although many of the gospel vocal techniques are in fact present in the SGC performance, the totality of the African American deeply embedded cultural trace that gave birth to them is not, and therefore the application of them by the SGC, whilst not ineffective, is quantifiably different and reflective of their own distinct cultural and musical heritage. However, it cannot be said that the SGC performance has no sense of “community” connection, personalisation or experience and expression of spirituality. The fact that the SGC perform gospel music at all, and with such obvious enthusiasm and musical proficiency, indicates that there exists for them a profound sense of connection with the music, the physicality of the vocal experience, with each other and with the unique community that they have become as a result of the transculturalisation of African American gospel music.

Comparative Musical Analysis – “Great Day.”

There have been a number of gospel songs titled “Great Day” including the traditional Spiritual “Great Day! Great Day!” (see Appendix 3) and James Cleveland’s “Great Day,” first recorded during the 1960s. Richard Smallwood’s “Great Day” was first released on the live recording *Richard Smallwood Adoration: Live In Atlanta With Vision* in 1996 (CD-A: Tr. 5), and the written score appears in the 1996 Warner publication of the same name.²⁴⁴ Unlike more recent publications, Smallwood’s score does not provide a notational representation or transcription of the soloists’ melody or extemporisations, but it does include the choir parts, lyrics and a piano score.

Gospel Piano – Smallwood and Legg

Although the differences between the written introduction (Figure 91) and the recorded piano introduction (Figure 92 and CD-E2: Tr. 11) appear relatively minor, they are significant and illustrative of both the type of interpretive nuance common in gospel music and the influence of gospel singing on instrumental performance practice.

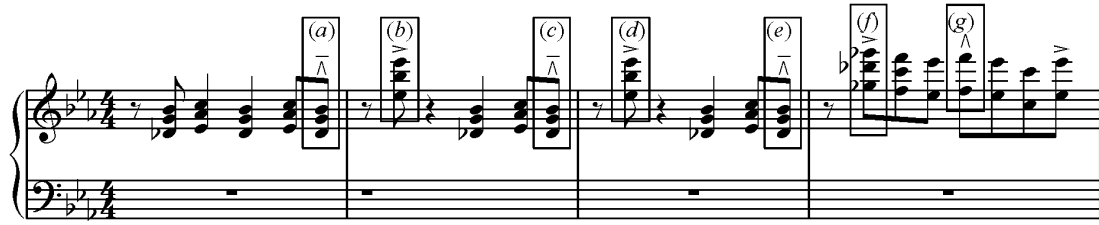
Figure 91: “Great Day,” written piano introduction.¹⁷⁸



²⁴⁴ Richard Smallwood, *Adoration: Live In Atlanta With Vision*, (Warner Bros. Publications, 1996), 25-34.

Figure 92: “Great Day,” recorded piano introduction, right hand only.

CD-E2: Tr. 11



The additional rhythmic emphases in Figure 92 at (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g), and the improvisational riff also at (b) and (c), highlights the syncopation of the rhythmic feel and articulates this simple phrase with the same interpretive freedom and rhythmic re-emphasis typical of the gospel singer.

My recorded version of this for the SGC introduction is also illuminating. The recorded left-hand pattern of Smallwood’s piano introduction is mixed well underneath the level of the bass and drums and is, as a result, difficult to differentiate. This interpretation (CD-E2: Tr. 12), therefore, fuses elements of the original piano introduction with the original bass guitar line (Figure 93) that appears in the left-hand pattern at Figure 94 (a); a blues inflection at Figure 94 (g); and a barrel house, boogie-woogie feel²⁴⁵ that borrows from both the piano style of Arizona Dranes²⁴⁶ and the later gospel-inspired Rock & Roll of the 1950s.

²⁴⁵ The term “barrel house” refers to the African American barrel house piano style of the early twentieth century. Usually played in regular 4/4 meter, barrel house piano featured ragtime-like left-hand accompaniment figures, a vamp style known as “stomping” and occasional walking bass lines. Boogie woogie was a predominantly faster piano style that emphasised the quaver subdivision of 4/4

Figure 93: “Great Day,” original bass guitar line opening bars.

CD-E: Tr. 11



Figure 94: “Great Day,” Legg recorded piano introduction.

CD-E: Tr. 12

meter. Both boogie woogie and barrel house piano styles contributed to the development of the blues piano style and were evident in the early gospel piano style of Arizona Dranes.

²⁴⁶ Refer also to page 148, Figure 73 and CD-E: Tr 89.

My interpretation here employs a two-bar phrase that uses a truncated, mildly accented quaver at Figure 94(b) to prepare or “set up”²⁴⁷ the syncopated bomb-like figure at (c) which punctuates the beginning of the new phrase; Smallwood however uses a sequence of one-bar phrases, punctuated by the syncopated right-hand octave riffs in Figure 92 at (b), (d) and (f).

The Smallwood Choir (Vision)

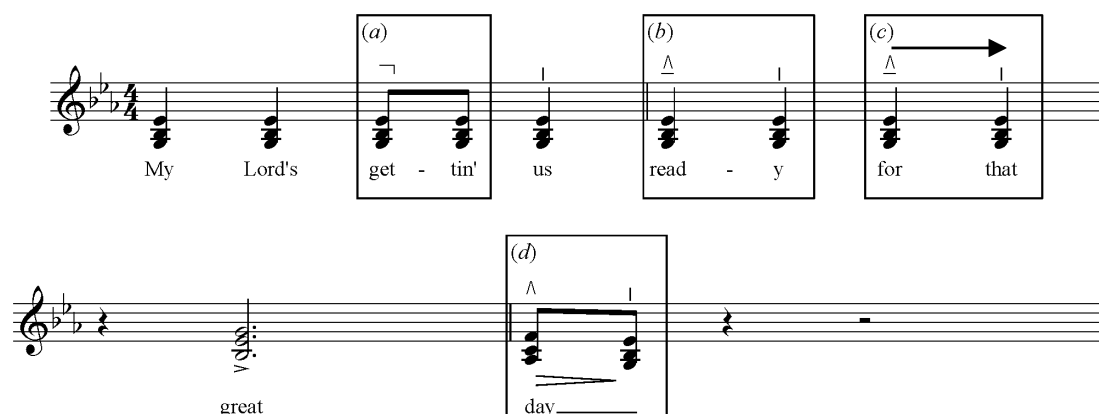
Smallwood’s choir enter for the first time in bar 9 and immediately demonstrate the shortcomings of conventional notation in representing the array of gospel singing techniques. Although the opening choir parts are relatively simple, as the written score would seem to indicate (Figure 95), the contrast between this and the annotated score (Figure 96) is significant.

Figure 95: “Great Day,” Smallwood original choir notation bars 9-12.



²⁴⁷ The term “set up” derives from Jazz performance practice, and originally referred to the manner in which a drummer rhythmically prepared or “set up” a major ensemble rhythmic accentuation or syncopation. The rhythmic set up would usually take the form of an improvised “fill” or drum extemporisation that preceded and added greater emphasis to a subsequent accentuation/syncopation. The term “set up” has since become a term applied to any instrumental or vocal material that prepares for and emphasises a subsequent significant rhythmic feature in the music.

Figure 96: “Great Day,” Smallwood annotated score opening bars 9-12.
CD-E2: Tr. 13



The truncated vowel/elongated consonant in Figure 96 (a) effectively softens the impact of the “t” consonant and with the front of the tongue placed against the roof of the mouth, the sound for the “n” consonant is reached earlier and sustained longer than expected as it resonates through the nasal cavity. This elongation produces a light emphasis on the “n” consonant which merges with the next word, “us.” “Gettin’ us” effectively becomes one word; “Ge-n-nus.” At this faster tempo ($q = 176$) one might expect the effect of this to be minimal; however, this technique produces a rhythmic “bounce” that is a result of the slightly uneven subdivision of the beat. This effect is reinforced in bar 3 where the crotchets on beats 1 and 3 are elongated whilst the crotchets on beats 2 and 4 are truncated. In Figure 96 (b), the word “ready” is divided into a longer, mildly emphasised tone for the first syllable “rea,” and a shorter syllable for the final, truncated syllable “dy.” This is mirrored in the next word, where “for that” becomes one word, “for-that” incorporating a vowel change in the merging of the two words. The emphasis of beats 1 and 3 in bars 9 and 10 in turn sets up for the contrasting and significant dynamic emphasis on the word “great” on beat 2 of bar 11, which is also effected by the greater length of the note. Finally, greater emphasis

is added to the first quaver of the final word “day,” truncating the last quaver and as a result, the harmonic and melodic resolution as well which becomes as much implied as sounded.

Smallwood’s choir continue this pattern of phrasing throughout the song. In the notated bridge passage for example (Figure 97), the choir sing the response to the soloists call, but again the annotated score (Figure 98) provides a clearer picture of the musical realisation of the notation where the phrasing, pitches and even individual words remain subjugated to the underpinning and articulated gospel rhythm.

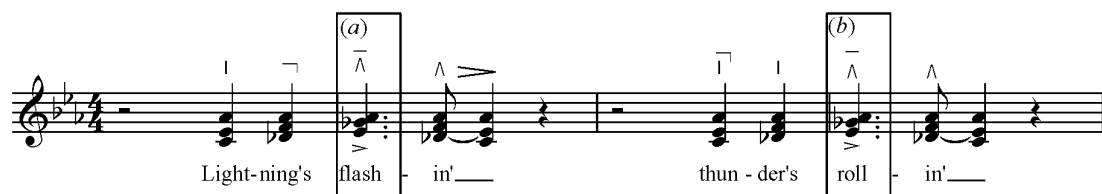
Figure 97: “Great Day,” bridge section, Smallwood original notation.

CD-E2: Tr. 14



Figure 98: “Great Day,” bridge section, annotated score.

CD-E2: Tr. 14



The choir truncate “light,” elongate the “n” in “lightning” and merge the final “s” consonant with the next word producing the phrase: “Light nin-sfla-shin.” The longer

note and the added emphasis at (a) and (b) draws the listener’s attention to the main descriptive words within the phrase (“flashin’,” “rollin’,”) which, when combined with the underpinning quaver-based grooves on the bass and piano, adds the rhythmic bounce that propels the music forwards.

Finally, the original “shout” or vamp section that concludes the song (Figure 99) provides for an additional soprano part that carries the initial “call” (“Come on”) and pre-emptively the entry of the soloist.

Figure 99: “Great Day,” annotated “shout” or vamp (Smallwood).
CD-E2: Tr. 15

The image shows a musical score for two staves. Staff (a) is a soprano line in 4/4 time, featuring a melodic line with lyrics "Come_ on____" and "Come_ on____". Staff (b) is a bass line in 4/4 time, featuring a harmonic line with lyrics "Let's get read - y" and "Let's get read - y". Both staves are in the key of B-flat major (two flats).

As demonstrated previously, the choir’s phrasing at Figure 99 (b) illustrates the use of elongation and truncation of notes and words to affect the feel of the song (moving quickly from the “o” vowel in “come on” and directly onto the “m” which they elongate, and also truncating the “y” in “ready”), encapsulating the essential rhythmic character of the entire song in the choir parts alone. The additional soprano “call” at Figure 99 (a) also highlights the use and effect of the rich texture of the gospel

vibrato, which is in evidence in all the choir voices throughout the recording (CD-E2: Tr. 13).²⁴⁸

Lead Gospel Vocal – Hatchett and Lurighi

The gospel vibrato is also particularly evident in the general tonal character of the gospel soloist Carolene Hatchett, which she combines with a slightly nasal and increasingly gravel-toned vocal sound from her first improvisational entry in the bridge section (Figure 100 and CD-E2: Tr. 16).

Figure 100: “Great Day,” Hatchett opening bars of verse two.
CD-E2: Tr. 16

The musical score for "Great Day" by Hatchett, showing the opening bars of verse two. The score is in 4/4 time and features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes lyrics: "Great day. Whoa si - nners will be run - nin' on that great day. Oh, oh si - nner." The piano accompaniment includes lyrics: "Sin - ners will be run - ning on that great day." The score is divided into five sections labeled (a) through (e). Section (a) shows a slide preceding a gravel tone and wail. Section (b) shows a rapid vibrato. Section (c) shows a slide preceding a gravel tone and wail. Section (d) shows a rapid vibrato. Section (e) shows a slide preceding a gravel tone and wail.

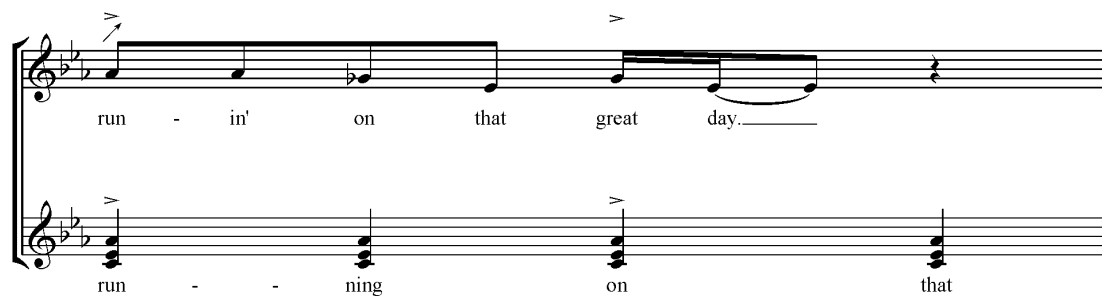
Hatchett employs a vast array of gospel singing techniques within her first 8 bars, including a slide that precedes a gravel tone and wail in Figure 100 (a), several rapid

²⁴⁸ The technique of “gospel vibrato” might also demand a specified notational symbol were it not for the fact that it is present in one form or another in the vast majority of gospel voices and performances. The “strained, full throated sound” that Boyer describes (“Contemporary Gospel,” 23) is almost always supported by the faster-oscillating gospel vibrato which is particularly evident in Smallwood’s choral vamp and significantly colours the majority of the choir’s performance.

gospel grupettos at (b) and (e), a rapid downward bend and truncated tone at (c) and several blues inflections including the $b5$ (A) and $b3$ (Gb) in the gospel grupetto at Figure 100 (b) and the $b3$ (Gb) at (d). Hatchett’s gospel phrasing is also particularly evident in Figure 101 where she sings the passage “runnin on that great day”.

Figure 101: “Great Day,” Hatchett gospel phrasing.

CD-E2: Tr. 16



Hatchett effectively halves the time values of the similar phrase sung by the choir, and places an emphasis on “great” which produces a cross-rhythmic effect as a result of the unusual rhythmic scanning that the semi-quavers produce in relation to the crotchet pulse on the words “great day.” Hatchett then builds the solo vocal line to a significant climax, increasing the gravel in her voice with each phrase (Figure 102 and CD-E2: Tr. 17).

Figure 102: “Great Day.” Hatchett climax of verse two.

CD-E2: Tr. 17

The musical score for Figure 102 is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat major). It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is marked with six sections: (a) 'Who shall, _', (b) 'who shall, _', (c) 'who shall, _ who', (d) 'shall', (d) cont. 'Yeah _', (e) 'a - ble _ to stand?', and (f) 'who shall, who _ shall be a - ble to stand?'. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

Hatchett’s gospel vibrato becomes more evident in Figure 102 at (a) and (b), and this continues throughout this section on all her sustained tones as she builds to the climax whilst using increasing amounts of gravel. The light gravel at (c) builds to heavy gravel at (d), which develops into a wail at (e) and a rapid upward bend followed immediately by a downwards slide. Hatchett’s performance is arresting, passionate, emotional and also tremendously complex.

The soloist for the Southern Gospel Choir recording of “Great Day” is classically-trained mezzo soprano and jazz singer, Maria Lurighi (CD-A: Tr. 6). In her first entry in verse two (Figure 103 and CD-E2: Tr. 18) Lurighi employs a distinctive gospel vibrato at (a) in addition to her use of flattened tones or “blue” notes at (b) and (e) and a blues inflection at (c).

Figure 103: “Great Day,” Lurighi opening bars of verse two.

CD-E2: Tr. 18

The musical score for "Great Day" by Lurighi, CD-E2: Tr. 18, is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for the first four measures. The vocal line includes five marked sections: (a) "Great", (b) "day", (c) "s -", (d) "will be run - in\' on that", and (e) "Oh now now". The piano accompaniment includes the lyrics "Sin - ners will be run - nin\' on that great day". The second system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for the next four measures. The vocal line includes five marked sections: (c) cont., (d) "will be run - in\' on that", (e) "Oh now now", (d) "will be run - in\' on that", and (e) "Oh now now". The piano accompaniment includes the lyrics "Sin - ners will be run - ning on that great day".

Lurighi’s improvisational, cross-rhythmic singing in Figure 103 (d) is quite different from Hatchett’s interpretation at this same point, but she still creates the same effect of the apparent “stretching of time.” As she vacillates between responding to the choir (d) and prompting their response (c), the listener becomes aware that Lurighi, like Hatchett, is to a significant degree in control of the intensity and emotional impact of the song itself. In similar fashion to Hatchett, Lurighi increases the dynamic and builds the intensity with each repeat of the phrase “who shall” in her vocal climax at the conclusion of the verse (see also CD-E2: Tr. 18), although interestingly she does not employ the increasing vocal gravel that is present in Hatchett’s version.

Both versions of “Great Day” conclude with an elongated vamp chorus where, after both choirs’ have established the vamp (“come on, let’s get ready”) Hatchett and Lurighi begin to improvise and interpolate over it (Smallwood CD-E2. Tr. 19)(SGC CD-E2. Tr. 21). In addition to her nasal tone and use of gravel, Figure 104 illustrates

Hatchett's solo becoming increasingly intense and complex as she builds the song to a powerful climax.

Figure 104: "Great Day," Hatchett improvised solo on Smallwood vamp.
CD-E2. Tr. 19

The musical score for Figure 104 is presented in two systems. The top system shows the first four measures of the solo, with lyrics "O Come on" and "Come on". The bottom system shows measures 5 through 8, with lyrics "Let's get read - y" and "Come on". The score includes a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. The solo is marked "Hatchett solo". The lyrics are written below the staff, with some words truncated. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Hatchett solo

(a) O (b) Come (c) on (d) Come

Let's get read - y Let's get read - y

(d) cont. (e) yeah

on Come on

Let's get read - y Let's get read -

Hatchett's opening phrase in the vamp commences with a long slide (a), an accented "c" in "come," a truncated vowel ("o" in "come") and elongated consonant ("m" in "come") at letter (b), followed by a more complex truncation on the word "on" (c) to which she also applies a vowel change as she merges into the elongation of the "n" in "on." At letter (d) Hatchett first flattens, truncates and then slides up to a wail with gravel which she concludes with a rapid descending gospel grupetto (e). She follows this section with an extended interpolation-like extemporized lyric (Figure 105).

Figure 105: “Great Day,” Hatchett interpolation.
CD-E2. Tr. 19

- L1 I wanna be ready, I wanna be ready
- L2 I wanna be ready, I wanna be ready
- L3 Stop your fightin’, stop that fightin’
- L4 Stop lyin’ yourself, I wanna be ready
- L5 Get your house in order, get your house in order
- L6 Get your house in order, I wanna be ready

At this point Hatchett follows the lead of the drummer who, in responding to the “Spirit” (his heightened level of spiritual and emotional awareness), does not entirely cease playing at the “expected” ending (CD-E2. Tr. 20) and who, with Hatchett, initiates an instant reprise.

Lurighi also employs an array of slides and blues inflections in her vamp solo with the SGC (Figure 106 and CD-E2: Tr. 21).

Figure 106: “Great Day,” Lurighi improvised solo and SGC Vamp.
CD-E2: Tr. 21

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and the guitar line. The vocal line has the lyrics "Are you ready?" and "Are you ready?". The guitar line has the lyrics "Let's get ready" and "Let's get". The second system shows the vocal line and the guitar line. The vocal line has the lyrics "I hear you're ready, the Lord is ready" and "read - y". The guitar line has the lyrics "Let's get ready" and "read - y". The third system shows the vocal line and the guitar line. The vocal line has the lyrics "dy" and "Let's get ready". The guitar line has the lyrics "Let's get ready" and "read - y".

Figure 106 displays a musical score for the song "Great Day," featuring Lurighi's improvised solo and the SGC Vamp. The score is written in 4/4 time and includes lyrics. The score is divided into three systems, each with a vocal line and a guitar line. The first system shows the vocal line with lyrics "Are you ready?" and the guitar line with lyrics "Let's get ready". The second system shows the vocal line with lyrics "I hear you're ready, the Lord is ready" and the guitar line with lyrics "Let's get ready". The third system shows the vocal line with lyrics "dy" and the guitar line with lyrics "Let's get ready". The score includes various musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Lurighi's vamp solo is as complex as Hatchett's, employing gospel rhythmic emphases (a), downward bends (b), flattened tones (c) and (d), an extended slide (e) and a significant vowel change across the final extended notes of her phrase (f) that also clearly illustrates her rapid gospel vibrato. Lurighi's vamp solo is musically effective and certainly functions as the catalyst for the increasing intensity of the SGC performance. However, Lurighi's extemporisations and interpolations are limited to simple repetitions and use of previous textual material (Figure 107 Line 8) drawing on the riff-like and simpler stylistic improvisational traditions of rhythm and blues.

Figure 107: “Great Day,” Lurighi vamp solo lyrics.

CD-E2: Tr. 21

- L1 Are you ready, are you ready?
- L2 I hear you’re ready, the Lord is ready
- L3 Let’s get a-ready, go on now y’ready
- L4 Because your ready, oo yes your ready
- L5 Yes sir you’er ready, come on now come
- L6 The Lord is ready, The Lord is ready, The Lord is ready
- L7 The Lord, come on ready
- L8 The trees are bendin’, the sinners are tremblin’

Lurighi does not assume the role of interpreter or preacher as Hatchett does, and her ability to interpolate in the gospel tradition must ultimately be defined by her more limited experience and understanding of it.

The Southern Gospel Choir

Although the general shape of the SGC phrasing is similar to Smallwood’s, the obvious contrast in tonal quality between Smallwood’s choir and the Southern Gospel Choir is marked from the SGC’s first entry in bar 8 (Figure 108 and CD-E2: Tr. 22).

Figure 108: “Great Day,” SGC choir entry bars 9 – 12.
CD-E2: Tr. 22

9

10

11

12

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)

My Lord's get - tin' us read - y for that great day

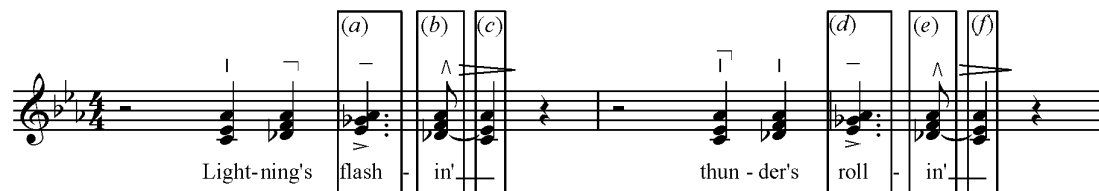
The SGC use truncation at (a), adding a slight emphasis to the first and third crotchets in bar 10 (b) and (c), and phrase the word “day” in much the same way as Smallwood’s choir. However, the tonal difference is particularly obvious with the “a” vowel in “grate” on the longer note at (d), where the absence of the gospel vibrato produces a brighter, nasal and slightly more uniform sound without the characteristic complex overtones that the gospel vibrato produces. In addition, the SGC use less de-emphasis of beats 2 and 4 in bar 10 and the second quaver in bar 12 (e) which removes a degree of the rhythmic bounce that provides the essential feel for the original version of the song.

This definable contrast in “rhythmic feel” is one of the most significant differences between the sound of the two choirs. In the bridge section that follows (CD-E2: Tr. 23), the SGC initially sing the word “flashin” with an emphasis and elongation the first syllable “flash” and a de-emphasis on the second syllable “in,” creating a similar feel to the Smallwood’s choir at this point. However, where Smallwood’s choir

continues this phrase shape, the SGC tend to adopt a smoother dynamic shape that again removes an element of rhythmic bounce (Figure 109).

Figure 109: “Great Day,” SGC bridge section (annotated score).

CD-E2: Tr. 23



Initially, the difference here appears small, for the SGC still elongate the important syllables within the phrase at (a) and (d) and then slightly emphasise the final quaver (b) and (e) with a diminuendo of the final syllables at (c) and (f) to create the cross-rhythmic effect. However, it is the absence of the major emphasis at (a) and (d) that effectively smooths out the phrasing, removing the exaggerated pronunciation and again an element of the rhythmic bounce.

Finally, it is the crucial vamp section (Figure 110 and CD-E2: Tr. 24) that most clearly demonstrates the greatest contrast between the sound of Smallwood’s choir and the SGC.

Figure 110: “Great Day,” SGC vamp.

CD-E2: Tr. 24

(a)

Come_ on_____ Come_ on_____

(b)

Let's get read - y Let's get read - y

The initial soprano call (a) of the SGC soprano section has a relatively thin texture and is sung with no discernible gospel vibrato and little attack or rhythmic emphasis on the first important syncopated consonant “c.” There is a lift in the intensity of the choir response at (b), but the expression of rhythmic feel is dynamically even across the phrase which does remove most of the rhythmic bounce and in general terms, the SGC vamp lacks the arresting and declamatory effect that Smallwood’s choir achieves (see previous Figure 99 and CD-E2: Tr. 15)

Concluding Comments

The contrast between the African American gospel sound and the sound produced by the SGC is particularly clear in “Great Day.” The author’s gospel piano style employs elements of barrelhouse piano in the style of Arizona Dranes, the rhythm section concept and more refined piano style of Roberta Martin and the cross-genre assimilations or “re-working” style of James Cleveland; and Lurighi’s jazz/soul-inspired gospel singing employs an array of gospel singing techniques including slides, blues inflections and improvisatory melodic and rhythmic singing to great

effect. As is the case for African American gospel performers, the author and Lurighi combine the technical elements of gospel performance in a unique musical expression that is reflective of their own musical, cultural and spiritual context. Whilst the choir's singing is accurate in terms of pitch representation and the basic structural elements of form and dynamic shape as defined by the Smallwood recording, their sound is generally upper part-dominant (soprano/alto) and thinner in texture across all parts, lacking the richness and complex overtones that the gospel vibrato produces in the tonal palette of Smallwood's choir. Additionally, the choir singing of the SGC clearly demonstrates a different conceptual framework in relation to the subdivision of the basic pulse, and this significantly influences and affects their general rhythmic expression, feel and groove.

Although to a degree my performance and that of Maria Lurighi's fit relatively easily within the broad "church" of African American gospel music stylistic interpretation, it is the choir sound of the SGC that provides the greatest contrast and that challenges traditional definitions of "gospel music." The analysis supports the fact that the perceived deficiencies in the Southern Gospel Choir's expression of specific fundamental African American gospel singing techniques limits to a degree their ability to create the full extent of dynamic expression evident in the original performances of "How I Got Over" and "Great Day." Of greater significance however is the degree to which the emotional and psycho-social reference sets that inform expression for the African American community do not and cannot inform the community of the Southern Gospel Choir in the same manner. Therefore, even if it were possible for each SGC member to acquire and execute the expansive set of technical gospel singing skills on demand, they would still not be able to produce an

“African American” gospel sound or performance, for whilst technical mastery can facilitate a musical performance, only the totality of the African America deeply embedded cultural trace could ever produce African American gospel music.

Nevertheless, this “gospel music” which so powerfully resonated with my spirit now also resonates in some fashion with the singers of the Southern Gospel Choir and indeed their audience who collectively, drawn together into the “church” of the Southern Gospel Choir, form a community of “faith” who are re-working, reshaping and recontextualising African American gospel music into a uniquely Australian and Tasmanian context.

CHAPTER 4

Further Exploration of Transculturalisation

Reworking Gospel Music

In their recordings of “How I Got Over” and “Great Day,” the Southern Gospel Choir clearly demonstrate an ability to execute some of the fundamental technical and musical characteristics of African American gospel, and there is little doubt that the energy and passion they generate in their performances have contributed to their unique branding within the Australian musical context. However, the analysis undertaken here demonstrates that the sound produced by the SGC is quantifiably not the same as the African American model to which they aspire and which, to a degree, they try to emulate. Although, as we have seen, the scores that they read from are either the same as the original (as for Smallwood’s “Great Day”) or a precise transcription of the recorded version (as for “How I Got Over”), the SGC has effectively rearranged or “reworked” these gospel songs into a new musical and cultural context.

I have employed the term “reworking” here to refer to the process where a pre-existing song is “used” in the creation of a new song or in a significant rearrangement or interpretation of that pre-existing song, where the new song or interpretation draws on and exhibits musical, lyrical and/or conceptual material from the original that is then crafted into a new context. Reworking operates on multiple levels of technical and musical complexity, emotional connectedness and expression and is informed by

context and culture, but at its most rudimentary it can involve the manipulation of the following key musical elements:

- Harmonic structures; including additional chordal extensions, harmonic substitutions and re-harmonisations.
- Time feel; including changes to the essential feel, individual instrumental groove and time signature.
- Form structure/design; including repositioning of verses/choruses and other sections, and the addition of new musical and lyrical material and vamps
- Texture; including rearrangement of choir parts, voice types and instrumental combinations and accompaniment.

Smallwood

Richard Smallwood illustrates this in his reworking of the traditional gospel song “Feast of The Lord” (CD-A: Tr. 7) in his new song “At The Table” (CD-A: Tr. 8),²⁴⁹ which he precedes with a short rendition of the original version of the song. The “Feast Of The Lord” is a traditional gospel blues²⁵⁰ and Smallwood’s version is performed with a medium tempo traditional gospel swing feel,²⁵¹ employing a traditional gospel “turnaround”²⁵² (at the end of each harmonic sequence) and “call and response” structure between soloist and choir in addition to the use of the

²⁴⁹ Richard Smallwood, *Richard Smallwood With Vision: Healing – Live In Detroit*, Verity 01241-43119-2.

²⁵⁰ See Chapter 1, *Blues and Gospel Blues Form*.

²⁵¹ The traditional gospel swing feel refers to the basic subdivision of the pulse, which in this case divides a bar of 4/4 meter into predominantly 2 strong pulses on beats 1 and 3 and is frequently underpinned by the bass guitar’s rhythmic pattern.

²⁵² A “turnaround,” also referred to as a “turnback” is a chord pattern that occurs at the end of chorus or repetitive chord sequence to lead the sequence back to the beginning of the pattern. An example of the traditional gospel turnaround chord sequence would be notated as follows;

traditional “high who” (CD-E2: Tr. 25). His “reworking” however employs a straight-eight feel²⁵³ that he underpins with a drum machine-generated rhythm track, employing sounds commonly used in contemporary Rhythm & Blues, Rap and Hip hop²⁵⁴ (CD-E2: Tr. 26), and a feel in the verse section that borrows from Funk,²⁵⁵ particularly evident in the use of slap bass (CD-E2: Tr. 27). Whilst retaining much of the original lyric (Figure 111) in his own chorus section, Smallwood constructs an entirely new lyric line for verses 1 and 2 (Figure 112).

Figure 111: “Feast Of The Lord,” original chorus lyrics.

Chorus 1

L1 Come on here where the table is spread

L2 And the feast of the Lord is going on.

L3 Come on here where the table is spread

L4 And the feast of the Lord is going on.

Figure 111: “Feast of the Lord,” (cont.)

The image displays a musical score for a piano. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two main sections by a vertical line. The first section, labeled 'Traditional gospel turnaround', consists of eight measures with the following chords: A^b, A^b/C, D^b, D^o, A^b/E^b, F^o, E^b/G, and A^b. The second section, labeled 'Beginning of gospel blues sequence', starts with a measure of A^b and continues with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A box labeled 'Traditional gospel 'two-feel'' is placed under the first measure of the second section.

²⁵³ The “straight-eight” feel refers to the even quaver subdivision of the crotchet beat.

²⁵⁴ Hip hop is “a collective term for black American urban art forms that emerged in the late 1970s; it is also applied specifically to a style of music that uses spoken rhyme (Rap) over a rhythmic background mainly characterized by the manipulation of pre-existing recordings.” David Toop “Hip hop,” Grove Music Online ed. L. Macy (Accessed 20th June, 2007), http://www.grovemusic.com.ezproxy.utas.edu.au/shared/views/article.html?from=search&session_search_id=163732237&hitnum=1§ion=music.46869

²⁵⁵ The “Funk” style of contemporary African American music emerged in the 1960s and 1970s and was characterised by the “use of syncopated interlocking rhythmic patterns based on straight quaver and semi quaver subdivisions a vocal style drawn from soul music, extended vamps based on a single and often complex harmony, strong emphasis on the bass line, and lyrics with frequent spiritual themes and social commentary.” David Brackett “Funk,” Grove Music Online ed. L. Macy (Accessed 20th June, 2007), http://www.grovemusic.com.ezproxy.utas.edu.au/shared/views/article.html?from=search&session_search_id=1175728503&hitnum=1§ion=music.46626

Chorus 2

- L1 There's joy over here where the table is spread
- L2 And the feast of the Lord is going on.
- L3 Joy over here where the table is spread
- L4 And the feast of the Lord is going on.

Figure 112: "Feast Of The Lord," Smallwood's reworked lyrics.²⁵⁶

Chorus 1

- L1 Come on in where the table is spread
- L2 And the feast of the Lord is going on.
- L3 Come on in where the table is spread
- L4 And the feast of the Lord is going on.

Verse 1

- L1 If you're seeking healing for your body (it's over here)
- L2 If you're seeking for the healing of your soul (it's over here)
- L3 If you're seeking for a soul salvation (it's over here)
- L4 If you want the Lord to make you whole (it's over here)

Verse 2

- L1 If you need more strength and power (it's over here)
- L2 Relief for your burdens and your pain (it's over here)
- L3 Seeking for some joy for your sorrow (it's over here)
- L4 Ceased and you will never be the same (it's over here)

Smallwood's new verses personalise the song and draw the listener's attention to the soloist who then follows her interpretation of Smallwood's verse lyrics with her own

²⁵⁶ Richard Smallwood, *At The Table*, in *Richard Smallwood With Vision Healing – Live In Detroit* (Warner Bros. Publications, 1999). For complete lyrics, see Appendix 4.

additional impassioned and improvised vamp lyrics. Into this vamp, she incorporates a variety of slides, wails, screams, gospel grupettos and interjections, delivered in the emphatic and declamatory “preaching style” (CD-E2: Tr. 28). Although Smallwood’s re-working of the first vamp employs increasingly complex chordal extensions and substitutions, (CD-E2: Tr. 29),²⁵⁷ – in part realising his declared intention at the beginning of the track of placing the original song in a new, contemporary context (“well, I had to bring it up to 98”) – he, at the same time, ensures the link between his new song and the original is explicit as he follows this announcement with the comment “but the message still is the same.”²⁵⁸ The manner and content of his address in the introduction goes further than simply asking the audience to remember a particular version of a particular song. Smallwood is drawing on, indeed depending on, a contextually sensitive, culturally-informed collective memory within his

²⁵⁷ Smallwood’s reworking makes particular use of the “sus” chord. The use of the suspended fourth within chord construction/voicings in jazz, was employed definitively by Herbie Hancock in his 1965 Blue Note recording of his composition “Maiden Voyage.” As a result of the later influence of popular music and the abundance of hybridised styles such as “Jazz-rock” and “Fusion,” the sus chord is now also frequently written as a poly-chord (see (a) and (b) below). Due to a degree of harmonic ambiguity, the sus chord can function as a substitution for a V7 chord in a V7 – I cadence sequence (see (c) below), or indeed as a link chord to other seemingly unrelated sus chords and/or tonal centres (as in “Maiden Voyage,” see (d) below). Smallwood however employs the sus chord as a V^{7sus} where the suspended fourth resolves downwards to the third before the chord sequence moves to another V^{7sus} chord (see (e) below).

(a) "sus" chord (b) poly-chord (c) sus as V7. (d) sus chord sequence (*Maiden Voyage*)

(e) *Smallwood sus chord sequence*

²⁵⁸ Richard Smallwood, *At The Table*, in *Richard Smallwood With Vision Healing – Live In Detroit*

community (audience and performer alike) in order to engage the audience and to intensify their communal musical, emotional and spiritual experience.

Hammond

Fred Hammond takes this concept further still in his live DVD, *Speak Those Things*.²⁵⁹ Hammonds' fusing of contemporary African American musical styles has brought him tremendous popular success in gospel music. However, whilst introducing the band to the audience at the beginning of this live concert, Hammond and his musicians interrupt their scheduled "set list" of songs with an impromptu rendering of four traditional gospel songs (CD-E2: Tr. 30).²⁶⁰ The feeling that Hammond increasingly generates here is one of being driven by the "spirit," of being "unable" to stop the old songs from "interrupting" the established schedule. This in turn generates an overwhelming vocal and physical response from the audience who, by applause, shouts, interjections, hand clapping and foot stamping give their ascent to the "spirit" that is prompting both Hammond, his band, and now them as well. Whether or not this is a "spiritual" phenomenon or a performance technique employed to elicit a communal psycho-emotional response or a subtle combination of both, Hammond is nevertheless relying on his community's pre-existing knowledge and understanding of these songs and their original socio-religious context to make a significant connection between himself, the musicians and the audience to enhance and intensify their sense of consensus, emotional and spiritual engagement and connectedness with their past. Hammond, like Smallwood, draws on this cultural knowledge, aligning himself with it, reinterpreting and reinforcing it for his own

²⁵⁹ Fred Hammond, *Speak Those Things: POL Chapter 3 – Live In Chicago* (Zomba Recording Corporation, 01241-4319-9, 2003).

²⁶⁰ Hammond uses four traditional gospel songs, "God Is A Good God," "I'm A Soldier In The Army Of The Lord," "Oh The Blood Of Jesus," and "I Know It Was The Blood."

generation and then asking that same generation to participate with him in the musical, physical, emotional and spiritual reinforcement of a powerfully and deeply visceral, non-transactional, trans-generational cultural memory.

Whilst the effectiveness and authenticity of the Southern Gospel Choir recordings of “How I Got Over” and “Great Day” can be debated, the nature of their “reworking” of these two gospel songs occurs for the most part on a purely technical, musical and emotional level. The ability to learn and execute specific gospel techniques is primarily determined by aural and intellectual ability, is honed by practice and rehearsal, and can be assessed in terms of accuracy of pitch, rhythm, time and design in a given performance. However, it is the emotional and psycho-social reference sets that so inform expression – in some part, the “cultural memory” to which Samuel A. Floyd Jr. refers²⁶¹ – that are the ultimate determinants of authentic or “true” African American gospel music expression, and therefore complete understanding of this is only fully accessible by those who constitute that same culture. Floyd supports this notion in his description of his “cultural memory,” which he defines as the “nonfactual and nonreferential motivations, actions, and beliefs that members of a culture seem, without direct knowledge or deliberate training, to ‘know’ – that feel unequivocally ‘true’ and ‘right’ when encountered, experienced, and executed.”²⁶² He further states that;

[Cultural memory] may be defined as a repository of meanings that comprise the subjective knowledge of a people, its immanent thoughts, its structures, and its practices; these thoughts, structures, and practices are transferred and

²⁶¹ Floyd, *The Power Of Black Music*, 8.

²⁶² Floyd, *The Power Of Black Music*, 8.

understood unconsciously but become conscious and culturally objective in practice and perception.²⁶³

Floyd illustrates this point by quoting from jazz trumpeter Sidney Bechet's book "Treat It Gentle," where Bechet beautifully describes the nature of African American cultural memory after initially referring to his grandfather Omar, saying that, "Inside him he'd got the memory of all the wrong that's been done to my people."

I met many a musicianer [*sic*] in many a place after I struck out from New Orleans, but it was always the same: If they was any good, it was Omar's song they were singing. It was the long song, and the good musicianers, they all heard it behind them. They all had an Omar, somebody like an Omar, somebody that was their Omar. It didn't need just recollecting somebody like that: it was the feeling of someone back there – hearing the song like it was coming up from somewhere. A musicianer could be playing it in New Orleans, or Chicago, or New York; he could be playing it in London, in Tunis, in Paris, in Germany. . . . But no matter where it's played, you gotta hear it starting way behind you. There's the drum beating from Congo square and there's the song starting in the field just over the trees. The good musicianer, he's playing *with* it, and he's playing *after* it. He's finishing something. No matter what he's playing, it's the long song that started back there in the South. It's the remembering song. There's so much to remember.²⁶⁴

Floyd's cultural memory, pre-empting conscious thought, is in part a constituent of the pre-existing socio-religious community knowledge and culture that gospel musicians like Fred Hammond and Richard Smallwood draw on, and which Craig Werner generally describes as the "gospel impulse."²⁶⁵ A gospel singer doesn't "choose" a specific gospel singing technique in order to produce an emotional or

²⁶³ Floyd, *The Power Of Black Music*, 8.

²⁶⁴ Sidney Bechet, *Treat It Gentle* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960), 200.

²⁶⁵ Werner, *A Change Is Gonna Come*, 28.

musical effect. Rather, their upbringing within African American culture places the gospel singer at the emotional and spiritual centre of past, present and future, enabling the singer to hear the song “starting way behind you,” in a visceral gospel impulse that effects and ultimately determines the nature of the musical expression which resonates throughout the entire community.

In syndetic terms, each gospel performance accretes previous moments of its text and its performance, expanding the consciousness of its performers within an expanding present.²⁶⁶

As a result, the communication of meaning – one of the defining characteristics of music as an art form, as was noted in chapter 1 – within African American musical expression is concealed within a coded language that in its simplest, most technical form can in fact be learned and communicated to a degree, as elements of the Southern Gospel Choir recordings support. However, at its deepest, most emotional, visceral and communicative level, this “coded language” is informed by the culturally-informed collective knowledge of the African American community, and as result produces a musical and spiritual expression that can only be fully understood by that same community.

Coded Language

The earliest African American slaves developed particular words and phrases within their new and imposed English language that deliberately concealed the true meaning of those words and phrases from those outside of this community, and this duality was

²⁶⁶ Dave Junker, “Gospel Memory and Afro-Modernism in Go Tell It On The Mountain,” *The Middle-Atlantic Writers Association Review* 19 (June 2004): 11-25.

also present within their music. The Negro spiritual for example was a musical expression that was extremely personal in character, which, according to Boyer, "... not only spoke of the slaves' relationship to God but also gave special attention to their position on earth and the difficult fate that had befallen them."²⁶⁷ The spiritual was not only a means of communion with God; it was also a means of covertly communicating feelings, opinions and important information with each other.

In the world outside the church, African Americans used the spirituals as codes to express their secret and most dangerous hopes and desires. They also used the spirituals to communicate from day to day about meetings, worship services and escape opportunities.... The invisible church was the black grapevine of news about abolitionism, slave revolts, and the Underground Railroad network. Its music was often used as the code and signal of the movement.²⁶⁸

The following lyrics, taken from the traditional spiritual "Steal Away," clearly illustrates this.

Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus.
Steal away, steal away home;
I ain't got long to stay here!

Green trees are bending, poor sinner stands a trembling.
The trumpet sounds within my soul;
I ain't got long to stay here!²⁶⁹

²⁶⁷ Boyer, *The Golden Age*, 11.

²⁶⁸ Sims-Warren, *Every Time I Feel The Spirit*, 16.

²⁶⁹ Sims-Warren, *Every Time I Feel The Spirit*, 16.

The initial impact of this powerful lyric articulately describes the African American slave's often well-founded belief in the brevity of life on earth ("I ain't got long to stay here") and the necessary link between "salvation" and the eternal, immeasurably better life that would inevitably follow for the "believer," as opposed to the less attractive fate that would befall the "poor sinners" who stand "a trembling" as a result of their unbelief. However, the coded language in "Steal Away" conceals a hidden meaning that Gwendolin Sims-Warren articulately describes;

In its brief verses, "Steal Away" spoke to the slave community with resonance. While the slave masters' preachers most often limited their sermons to the propaganda that sustained slavocracy, the slaves stole themselves and their spirits away to their secret hush harbors or even to freedom in the North via the Underground Railroad. "When [we] go round singin' 'Steal Away to Jesus'," recalled one slave named Wash Wilson, "dat mean dere gwine be 'ligious meetin' dat night [*sic*]." ²⁷⁰

However, as important as this code was to the slave, and indeed to our increased understanding of the text, there exists an even deeper level of coded language in "Steal Away" that is less explicit but even more powerfully resonant.

It's clear from the testimony of fugitive and freed slaves that the slave holders considered any evidence of an "invisible" church subversive or at least threatening. . . . Slave revolt leader Nat Turner, a preacher in Virginia, reportedly used this song to call his co-conspirators together. Slave holder responses to the discovery of services varied. Some might do no more than to send someone to warn worshippers to stop the noise or else to answer abusive and violent patrollers. Others went so far as to flog the preacher "until his back

²⁷⁰ Sims-Warren, *Every Time I Feel The Spirit*, 85.

pickled,” then flog his listeners until they were forced to tell who else was there.²⁷¹

Sims-Warren then further describes a particular incident and action taken against “George,” a slave and preacher.

This preacher, named George, disregarded his so-called master’s threat of five hundred lashes if he continued preaching to his slave community. George escaped across the Savannah River to Greenville, South Carolina, in an attempt to avoid the whip. On the way, however, he ended up striking with a rifle a white man who had tried to shoot him. George was captured and jailed, and his master came to claim him, but was unable to do so. The authorities instead gave George’s master \$550 as payment for George’s life. Then, in a wooden pen in front of a huge, forced assemblage of other enslaved African-Americans, Greenville officials burned George alive.²⁷²

This horrific example of inhumanity is powerful enough in and of itself, and yet this type of brutality and the “rule of fear” that the threat of such deathly violence was able to generate, resonates at the core of the song that “starts way behind” and which informs the whole of African American life and existence.

The Deeply Embedded Cultural Trace

In his book *The Power of Black Music* Samuel A. Floyd Junior examines what he describes as the African “cultural memory,” and its impact on the “continuity and elaboration of African-American music.”²⁷³ Basing his research model on the work of Sterling Stuckey’s book, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of*

²⁷¹ Sims-Warren, *Every Time I Feel The Spirit*, 86.

²⁷² Sims-Warren, *Every Time I Feel The Spirit*, 86.

²⁷³ Floyd, *The Power Of Black Music*, 5.

Black America and drawing on Henry Louis Gates Junior's seminal literary work *The Signifying Monkey*,²⁷⁴ Floyd describes several key aspects of African cultural, spiritual and music concepts and expressions that he suggests are significant to the development of what he describes as an African American "cultural memory." For example, Floyd describes Stuckey's theory that "the ring shout was the main context in which [transplanted] Africans recognized values common to them,"²⁷⁵ in particular the values of "ancestor worship and contact and of communication and teaching through story telling and trickster expressions...."²⁷⁶ Floyd expands this concept, linking the ring shout with the Negro spiritual and, by evolutionary line, the development of African American gospel music.

[Stuckey] explains that the shout was a distinctive cultural ritual in which music and dance were merged and fused, that in the ring the musical practices of the slaves converged in the Negro spiritual and in other African-American musical forms and genres. In this way, the ring helped preserve the elements that we have come to know as the characterising and foundational elements of African American music....From the ring shout emerged the shuffling, angular, off-beat, additive, repetitive, intensive, unflagging rhythms of shout and jubilee spirituals...²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ Henry Louis Gates Jr, *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

²⁷⁵ Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 16.

²⁷⁶ Floyd, *The Power of Black Music*, 6.

²⁷⁷ Floyd, *The Power of Black Music*, 6. Floyd outlines a list of "characterising and foundational elements" which this exegesis has for the greater part categorised, annotated and notated for the purpose of clarity in analytical description and comparison within the genre of gospel music in chapters 2 and 3. In his written description, Floyd's lists the following: calls, cries, hollers; call and response devices; additive rhythms and poly-rhythms; heterophony, pendular thirds, blue notes, bent notes, elisions; hums, moans, grunts, vocables and other rhythmic-oral declamations, interjections, and punctuations; off-beat melodic phrasings and parallel intervals and chords; constant repetition of rhythmic and melodic figures and phrases (riffs and vamps); timbral distortions; musical individuality within collectivity; game rivalry; hand clapping, foot patting; apart-playing; the metronomic pulse that underlies all African American music.

Floyd's "evolutionary line" links the functions and practices of the gospel singer, through the spiritual and the ring shout to traditional African conceptual and interpretive frameworks where he states;

My position... [is that] African survivals exist not merely in the sense that African-American music has the same characteristics as its African counterparts, but also that the musical *tendencies*, the mythological beliefs and assumptions, and the interrogative strategies of African Americans are the same as those that underlie the music of the African homeland, that these tendencies and beliefs continue to exist as African cultural memory, and that they continue to inform the continuity and elaboration of African-American music.²⁷⁸

Floyd's argument suggests a predominantly semiotic framework that falls well outside of the scope of this exegesis. However, whilst Floyd's highlighting of the term "musical tendencies" in part also supports Werner's notion of a "gospel impulse," I would go further. There exists for African America a more deeply visceral, non-transactional, trans-generational cultural memory which constitutes what I now refer to as the African American deeply embedded cultural trace, and which defines, intertwines and enfolds the totality of African American musical expression, community and culture. Although this significant cultural trace originates in traditional African culture, it is, however, quite clearly, distinctly and uniquely African "American." It is a confronting and uncomfortable reality that the

²⁷⁸ Floyd, *The Power of Black Music*, 5. Floyd suggests a direct evolutionary line for the gospel singer's technique of both pre-emptive and responsive singing that he traces to Africa and the mythological stories surrounding the trickster character of the god "Esu" which are recontextualised in the African American trickster stories such as "Why Monkey's Live In Trees" and "Why the Dog Chases Other Animals." At this point, Floyd draws on the Gates' *The Signifying Monkey*, maintaining that the African use of word-play and Gates' concept of "signifyin(g)" (annotated with parenthesis to differentiate it from the term "signification" employed by semioticians) conceptually underpins the gospel singers' use of anticipation and delay – singing a lyric line either before the choir as if to say "I'm well ahead of you now," or after the choir, as if to say "well, actually, now I'm not."

descriptions of the oppressive and violent existence of slaves like “George” that were noted previously are not only common throughout African American existence, they define it. The lives of enforced African migrants were poured into a crucible of slavery, racism and violent, systematic oppression that, even beyond the initial culture shock of transportation and “first contact” with the New World, produced, underpinned and continually reinforced the cohesiveness and interconnectedness of the African American community. Omar’s song, the song that “starts way behind” defines the nature of the deeply embedded cultural trace that is in fact the product of a cataclysmic collision of cultures, virulently sustained throughout the following generations. The deeply embedded cultural trace is, to a significant degree, Omar’s song; it contains, expresses and informs the totality of African American existence. Omar’s song – the long song, the remembering song, the “feeling of someone back there, hearing the song like it was coming up from somewhere” – becomes for each generation a visceral, subconscious expression of “all the wrong that’s been done to my people,” and it is this deeply embedded cultural trace that continues to uniquely define the African American community and inform its continuing development of a unique cultural identity.

The Commercialisation of Gospel Music.

The influence and effects of the deeply embedded cultural trace have in some form also reached beyond the African American community, informing broader American and Western popular musical expression and culture, indeed providing the essential catalyst for the development of that same Western popular culture.

Yet, as it turned out, no one in the young [American] nation was as American as the Africans, free or not, because more than any of the voluntary

immigrants from anywhere, they were forced to create themselves from scratch. They became the seminal, disproportionate creators of American culture because . . . they were working, along with their white masters, on a blank slate. They were excluded from whiteness, and thus from recognition as Americans, even as they led the creation of the culture. The exclusion produced the tension that has driven American popular culture from the start.²⁷⁹

The sounds and performance practices of gospel music are entrenched in the contemporary popular music of the twentieth and twenty first centuries, and this “commercialisation” of gospel music has laid the musical and indeed financial foundations for the greater part of the contemporary popular music industry. The existence of the Tasmanian Southern Gospel Choir represents an extension of this process to a degree, in that they perform African American sacred gospel music within a predominantly secular context. However, unlike other gospel-inspired contemporary music styles that have moulded gospel techniques and concepts into a secular expression, the SGC perform African American sacred music in a conventional concert-style environment. This fact, along with the continued secularisation of African American gospel music, remains a significant challenge for many African Americans for whom gospel music is an expression of Christian spirituality, and one that should exist exclusively within and for that community of faith. Boyer states that as early as the 1940s, the African American church understood that “gospel music was the *one* remaining *pure* Afro-American music expression to which the Afro-American could lay claim”²⁸⁰ and that the pervasive influence of secular or “concert hall” gospel would irrevocably change the nature of traditional

²⁷⁹ Wynter, *American Skin*, 6.

²⁸⁰ Boyer, “Contemporary Gospel Music,” 6.

gospel, raising the question: “Is it possible that one day gospel music will no longer belong to the church?”

By the late 1940s Sister Rosetta Tharpe had become America’s first nationally recognized gospel singer whose popular success had in part helped spark this sacred/secular debate within the African American gospel music community. The Newport Jazz Festivals of 1957 and 1958 had featured gospel music performances by Clara Ward and the Ward singers and Mahalia Jackson respectively, and together with Jackson’s subsequent performances at Carnegie Hall, these had in a sense proclaimed the universality of the gospel music genre. However, Ward and Jackson were still performing sacred gospel music, albeit in a secular environment. Artists like Tharpe, Ray Charles and later Aretha Franklin, however, provided an even greater challenge for gospel as their unique brand of popular music borrowed and even blatantly plagiarised the sacred sounds, performance practices and even specific songs of gospel music. In commenting on the secularisation of gospel music and Tharpe’s performance at the famous 1938 Carnegie Hall concert, Gayle Wald writes:

Within months of “From Spirituals to Swing” Tharpe was already being incorporated into an emerging mythology of gospel crossover, one that would blossom more fully in the 1940’s along with the growth of commercial interest in religious music as a mainstay of the race record industry. This “crossover mythology” . . . was the product of contradictory narratives: one that insisted on identifying Tharpe as a folk musician whose art was indissolubly linked to the traditions of African American Pentecostalism and another that celebrated the capacity of gospel song to transcend socially bounded categories of identity.²⁸¹

²⁸¹ Gayle Wald, “From Spirituals To Swing,” 7.

Where Tharpe's musical output moved "constantly between the sacred and secular, rather than sticking, more conventionally to one side of the divide," the music of Ray Charles, and the raft of gospel-inspired soul singers who followed in his wake, plainly did not. Although Charles' often thinly-veiled and largely uncredited "re-workings" of cherished gospel songs earned him the instant and vocal disapproval of a substantial section of the African American religious community,²⁸² his ability to "rework" the sacred into a secular context was in fact directly informed by the essential traditions and practices of the gospel music of that same religious community. Ray Charles, brought up within the African American church, re-inscribed the historical consciousness of both the spiritual and gospel song into a secular context, where his musical and physical delivery varied little from the emotional, passionate and frenzied style of the songs composed "under the spirit" in the African American Pentecostal church. No doubt it was this affecting and challenging juxtaposition of the sacred and secular that elicited much of the fervent dissention and disquiet expressed by the African American community towards that which they viewed as an "unholy alliance." It was in this fertile soil however, that contemporary popular music took root and breathed new life into the popular music industry. Whether it was in the unmistakable down-home blues roots of John Lee Hooker or the gospel inspired screams and wails of Little Richard; the sincerest African American gospel imitations of Elvis Presley; the piano oriented gospel blues of Fats Domino; or even the pale gospel reworkings of artists like Pat Boone, the

²⁸² Ray Charles first number one hit, "I've Got a Woman" was written by Charles and his manager, David Jones whilst travelling between gigs and listening to the radio. As they were listening and singing along to the gospel classic "It Must Be Jesus" by The Southern Tones on the car radio, they began to improvise and play with the lyrics, effectively reworking the song into a new context. The recording and its success brought Charles considerable opposition from a significant section of the African American religious community both for the "sacrilegious" use of sacred music in a pop song, but also for his unwillingness to credit the original song and therefore provide appropriate residuals and kudos to the original composer.

influence of African American gospel music is clear. For the new and ascendant musical expressions of contemporary popular music – Rhythm & Blues and Rock & Roll – the use of the voice, the musical instruments, the physicality of the body and the expectation of audience engagement and interaction, were, apart from the sexual orientation of the lyrics, unmistakably “African American Gospel” in derivation. It was the plethora of new, gospel-inspired contemporary popular musical expressions that carried African American music throughout the world, including Australia.

Additionally, the use of emergent technologies also significantly contributed to the expansion and spread of both gospel and the gospel-inspired sounds of Rock & Roll, Rhythm and Blues and Soul. New York radio stations WMCA and WRNY were among the first to bring African American sacred music to the attention of the wider American public, who had been broadcasting male gospel quartets like the Southernaires and the Dixie Hummingbirds outside of their traditional religious context since the early 1930s. WLAC in Nashville was also allocating program time for both Rhythm and Blues and Gospel in their evening shifts, and with their transmitters covering thirty-eight states and reaching in excess of eight million listeners, the sound of gospel music became accessible to white audiences as well as black, filling the airwaves and becoming part of the fabric of greater America. Additionally, with the rise of gospel concerts or “singings” – gospel music performed outside the confines of the church building – gospel music truly began to reach beyond the boundaries of the African American community, albeit often in a somewhat emaciated and sanitised form designed to cater for a conservative and racially sensitive greater America.

The sounds and performance practices of gospel music – harmonic language, personalisation and emotionalism, singing styles, instrumental techniques, melodic invention and improvisation, rhythmic emphasis, interpretation, inflection and expression of the pulse, the moves, the dance steps, the general physicality of the performance and the significance and effect on performance of the reaction and interaction of the audience – provided the impulse that catalysed the development of the new contemporary popular music forms of Rhythm & Blues and Rock & Roll. Furthermore, it was these same gospel-inspired contemporary popular music genres which in part carried the gospel sound across the world and into the musical traditions and culture of Australia.

The Resonance of Gospel Music in Australia

The performances of the Southern Gospel Choir are unique within the Australian musical landscape. Their recordings and live performances are generally visually engaging, exciting and musically expressive experiences to which their record and concert sales, high profile within the Australian community and sustained positive audience response attest (see Appendix 8.1, DVD-B: Tr. 5). However, the ascendant and defining influence and impulse of the deeply embedded cultural trace that so directly informs African America plainly cannot and does not speak to the Tasmanian community in the same manner. If then as Floyd states, “all African American-music making is driven by and permeated with the memory of things from the cultural past,”²⁸³ why and how does African American gospel music resonate across such a significant cultural boundary and enter into the lives and culture of the Australian and specifically Tasmanian community? How indeed can meaning be communicated for

²⁸³ Floyd, *The Power of Black Music*, 10.

Australians when the contextual touchstones of gospel music are not obviously part of contemporary Australian culture?

The greater majority of Australians and Tasmanians in particular do not and cannot have complete access to the depth and influence of African American community and culture because they are not born of that culture and do not live within its defining geographical, ideological or cultural boundaries. However, the “resonance” that African American gospel music evokes in many Australians is still powerful. It establishes a unique “Australian” set of emotional, physical, musical and spiritual “connections” to that music and culture which with many Australians identify by varying degree of depth and intensity, facilitating a form of international, trans-cultural access into the music and culture of African American gospel.

Popular Music Culture

The sound of African American gospel music in Australia is in part already woven into the fabric of Australian popular culture. Whether through contemporary popular recordings, film, advertising jingles, the internet or the many other increasingly numerous and diverse music-saturated media genres, contemporary popular music has carried the essential elements of the emotional, physical, musical and spiritual content of gospel across the globe and into the multicultural fabric of Australian society.

Today, it is African American music, in structure and often in content, that drives mainstream popular culture worldwide. Any honest discussion about the contemporary music culture of the United States of America is almost always also a discussion of the African American music tradition. . . . Whether the community of musicians and audience is American, European, or Asian, or whether the audience crosses class or culture, the way the voice is used, the

way instruments are held and played, the way instruments sound when played, the way an audience responds in a contemporary concert, the way in which a performer has dialogue with the audience, *all can be traced to the African American worship tradition created within the Black church.* (italics mine)²⁸⁴

It should not surprise us then when the mainstream popular music industry and record buying public seemed to accept without question the inclusion of the New Jersey Mass Choir in Foreigner's "I Want To Know What Love Is" or the Harlem Gospel Choir in U2's "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For." In both of these examples the use of typical gospel choir part writing (see also Appendix 5) and the "open throated," emotionally charged timbre of the gospel choir complements, highlights and significantly lifts the intensity of each song. The key musical and emotional components of African American gospel are in fact implicit in the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic structures of contemporary popular music, as are the performance practices of the musicians who perform it, and the ease and effectiveness with which gospel and popular music re-connect within the context of contemporary popular song lends significant support to this notion. Within an Australian context, the essential elements of the "gospel sound," contained within this imported and increasingly even home-grown contemporary popular music, have laid some significant, trans-cultural musical foundations that continue to provide a context within which Australians can find musical connection with gospel music.

Spiritual Culture

²⁸⁴ Reagon, *We'll Understand It Better By And By*, 4-5.

The spiritual connection that gospel music makes with some sections of the Australian community is also significant to the resonance that gospel music achieves within this culture. Australian religious life traditionally has found expression within the dominant Christian faith, and more specifically within the Roman Catholic church and Church of England/Anglican denominations.²⁸⁵ Although Australian Bureau of Statistics figures indicate that the traditional Christian church experience is increasingly irrelevant for a significant and increasing proportion of the Australian population, many members of the SGC and the audiences who attend their concerts are at least familiar with the iconic Judeo-Christian concepts that are common to African American and Australian cultures and that are enshrined in social values, practices and even domestic law. The Christian religious “experience” may not be common to all Australians, but the universal concepts of love, hope, equality and justice certainly are, as are the foundational biblical stories – Adam, Eve and creation, Noah and the flood, the Christmas story, the sacrificial life of Jesus – that contain and transmit these concepts into Australian culture. Even where Australians do not accept the notion of a spiritual universe or a divine, loving creator, they cannot ignore the effect that such a belief has on African Americans, and which is so demonstrably and infectiously expressed in their gospel music. Although few Tasmanians would have experienced the oppression and violence of slavery, fewer would fail to be moved by and feel genuine empathy with the real-life stories of slaves like George. George’s story, like the thousands of others like it, are the constituents of the song that starts “way behind” and that is carried into the Australian context within the very fabric of the gospel music that the Tasmanian Southern Gospel Choir choose to sing. The

²⁸⁵ According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the early European settlers founded Christian churches of the following denominations: Roman Catholic, Church of England (now Anglican), Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregational and Lutheran. ABS online, accessed 26 June, 2007. <http://abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/46d1bc47ac9d0c7bca256c470025ff87/bfdda1ca506d6cfaca2570de0014496e!OpenDocument>

religious experiences and practices of African Americans and Australian Tasmanians may well be worlds apart, but the universal concepts and ideologies – also articulately described and powerfully conveyed in the totality of the performances of the Southern Gospel Choir – are not.

The Socio-economic Context

Although the depressed socio-economic context of African American slavery is quite removed from the general Tasmanian experience, many Tasmanians do collectively feel – as members of relatively small, somewhat insulated island culture – a sense of relative economic and cultural poverty as a result of their isolation and disconnectedness from the perceived economic and cultural wealth of the so-called “mainland” Australians.²⁸⁶ Obviously the disconnectedness and isolation that racial oppression produces for African Americans is altogether an infinitely greater evil than most Tasmanians have ever had to endure. However, the lyric content of African American gospel songs which so immediately and directly describes and details their attitudes and feelings towards their poverty, disconnectedness and cultural isolation also resonates with many Tasmanians. In addition, the musical excellence and significant critical acclaim afforded the Southern Gospel Choir engenders within its members, audience and community a genuine perception of significant cultural achievement which, in a very real sense, lifts its members and their audiences above their perceived cultural poverty, reaffirming at the same time the inherent value and “community” of the ensemble for its members.

²⁸⁶ The most recent information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics supports this notion where it states; “Tasmania’s mean equivalised disposable household weekly income was 15% below the national average....” Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Household Income and Income Distribution 2005-2006* (Document number 6523.0, released at 11:30am, Thursday 2 August, 2007). Additionally, current ABS figures also indicate that Tasmania has the second lowest “Cultural Funding” allocation from either State or Federal governments. Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Cultural Funding by Government, Australia 2006-06* (Document number 4183.0, released at: 11:30am, Thursday 23 August, 2007).

The Culture of Violence

Many Tasmanians also experience at least an intellectual if not emotional connection with the African American responses to the violence inherent in their slave ancestry powerfully expressed through the lyrics of their gospel songs. The Tasmanian community continues to tell and re-tell the often-violent stories of their convict and indigenous histories. Interestingly, the specific “acts” of violence are regularly depicted with great attention to detail, and many of the original penal settlements such as Port Arthur, the Women’s Prison at South Hobart, and Port Macquarie on the state’s west coast, have become more than simply beautifully maintained sites of historical and educational significance; they have become shrines of remembrance, a graphic reminder and an institutionalised reinforcement of the violence embedded in Tasmania’s rich and colourful history. Whether or not and to what extent contemporary Tasmanian society and culture continues to be directly “informed” by this historical/cultural memory is debateable. However, more recent tragic events such as Martin Bryant’s shocking massacre of thirty-five innocent people in and around the Port Arthur site on April 28 1996, and the murder of the four Shoobridge girls in 1997,²⁸⁷ whilst obviously abhorrent by any definition, have also certainly and dramatically reinforced the Tasmanian community’s awareness of the violence simmering beneath their culture. As we have seen, the earliest African American responses to the violence of slavery and their existence in general are recorded and encoded in the lyrics of their religious music, and for some Tasmanians, particularly those living in the South – geographically closest to the most prominent reminders of this violent past – there can exist an emotional connection through the lyrics of the

²⁸⁷ On June 26 1997, Tasmanian poet Peter Shoobridge murdered his four daughters while they slept. The girls attended two local schools (Albuera Street primary and St. Michaels Collegiate) and were mourned by the greater Hobart community.

gospel songs. Spirituals and gospels alike describe the immense hardships of life; the cruelty of slavery; the inevitability of early death; the need for and reliance on communal support, an eternal hope and a just God; and even the covert defiance of authority. Ultimately, they acknowledge the suffering of the past, provide comfort in the present, and an eternal assurance and hope of a just redemption in the future. Tasmania's island culture and its unique and distinctive past – reinforced through the re-telling and marking of its stories, continually reconnecting this community with their often violent history – provides the foundation for an emotional and even “spiritual” connection for many Tasmanians with African American gospel music. Gospel music not only embodies the feelings and attitudes of African Americans towards violence and oppression, but loudly and powerfully proclaims their eventual and inevitable victory over it.

The Physicality of Gospel

Finally, many Tasmanians, particularly the members of the SGC, also experience a physical connection with gospel music. The SGC performances are characterised by constant, repetitive movements (side-to-side), clapping and foot stomping which is executed in a synchronised, cooperate manner. This physical repetition of unified movement is coupled with the unified regulation of breathing and heart rate that group singing elicits, as well as the physical resonances that are “felt” by the performers as a result of the intensity of melodic and harmonic dissonances and resolutions that are particularly associated with close harmony singing. Effective choral singing demands that these functional elements operate in a unified expression and this further reinforces the sense of community, “one-ness” and ultimately connection to the physicality of African American gospel experienced within the choir body.

The depth to which any individual member of the SGC or their audience will experience these physical, emotional, musical and spiritual connections will differ for each person. Some will respond more to the musical connections than the emotional or spiritual, and those responding musically and emotionally may do so at varying levels of intensity within those same categories. However, African American gospel music resonates at a deeper level still which transcends the purely intellectual, musical, physical or emotional domains in a powerful musical expression that is immediate, universally spiritual and intensely visceral.

The Resonance of African American Gospel Music.

African American gospel music is embedded in Western contemporary popular music and culture. The affects of gospel melody, harmony, rhythmic construction and its demonstrative physicality underpin the greater part of the sound, the look and the practices of contemporary popular musicians and the contemporary music industry of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. However, as has been previously established, African American gospel music is generally only understood and recognized within broader western popular culture as it is reflected and all too often “mirrored dimly” in the plethora of contemporary popular music styles that it has borne and inspired. The Southern Gospel Choir however have been able to successfully establish and sustain a musical expression that is directly informed by African American gospel music and practice, and it is the role of the choir’s director that within this context becomes particularly significant. The director of the SGC functions as the mediator and advocate of a trans-cultural tradition for the Southern Gospel Choir and their

audience, acting as a “cultural bridge” for the transculturalisation of African American gospel music into the Tasmanian context.

African American gospel music has largely directed the course of my life and career to a significant extent since childhood. In asking Dr. Anthony Campbell on one occasion how it was possible, in his opinion, that I could be so significantly affected and moved by gospel music, he gave the reply; “our music resonates with your spirit.” It is the nature and evolution of this resonance then that lies at the centre and heart of the Southern Gospel Choir, my role as its founder and director, and indeed the culture and community of this developing and uniquely Australian and Tasmanian gospel music tradition.

Although my earliest formal music education was in traditional classical piano, from the outset I demonstrated a preference for the music of gospel-inspired contemporary piano players like Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder, Richard Tee, Mike McDonald, Elton John, Billy Joel, and pianist/evangelist, Keith Green. My favourite songs were characterised by a disproportionate representation of gospel sounds, “licks” and rhythms, and so it was not surprising that on hearing my first “authentic” African American gospel song – James Cleveland’s “Jesus is the Best Thing That Ever Happened to Me” – the resonance of gospel music was established for me with greater clarity and depth of meaning. Cleveland’s impressive and powerful piano style was emotionally charged and passionately performed with a strong rhythmic impulse and explicit feel that both engaged and drew together the many gospel-inspired musical connections already established in my life and experience of contemporary popular music performance practice. Cleveland’s piano style, coupled with the gravel-

toned texture of his open-throated singing voice, suggested not only passion, but a strength of conviction that was to prove irresistible for a young Australian man already sensitised to the negative social stigma commonly expressed by his peer group towards “classical” musicians, the male children of religious clerics and, worst of all, of just being “different.”²⁸⁸ Contemporary music – particularly Rock and Roll – had in part established a legitimacy for me within my peer group, one which helped to eventually define a powerful position for me within that same community. Consequently, African American gospel redefined my context for contemporary music and couched it within a religious framework that fitted comfortably within my Pentecostal-style Anglo-Catholic spiritual experience and upbringing. Gospel music’s connection of ecstatic spiritual experience, technically demanding, emotional and emphatic musical expression and excellence in contemporary popular musical performance became for me a significantly catalysing and empowering expressive musical force.

It was then due to the later influence and support of Dr. Campbell that I was invited to attend the 30th Anniversary Gospel Music Workshop in Cincinnati in 1997 as a “featured performer” which, coupled with the performance tour that followed, introduced me to the African American gospel and religious communities that now so informs, sustains, nurtures, and inspires me. Living with African American families, sharing their stories and their lives and working within the African American Missionary Baptist church as a Minister in Music, I now also occupy a perhaps unique position within the Tasmanian community and the developing culture of Australian

²⁸⁸ My father was the rector of the Anglican parish of St. Clements church in Kingston Tasmania. I was involved in church life from an early age, and increasingly so as I became the organist at St Clements at approximately twelve years old. My childhood home was on the church property and with no close neighbours, our physical separation from the community also partly contributed to my juvenile perception of social and cultural isolation.

gospel music. Resultantly, a part of African American gospel music and culture is mediated for the Tasmanian community through my direction of the SGC. It is therefore both the nature of gospel music's resonance within me, my expression and communication of that same resonance and my own unique musical heritage that ultimately defines to some degree the context and culture for African American gospel music in Tasmania and most directly for the Southern Gospel Choir.

One of the most significant and direct ways in which this resonance is communicated to the choir is within the context the SGC's weekly class rehearsal. My rehearsal structure and pedagogical method seeks to span and interconnect the intellectual, aural, emotional and visceral/physical, enabling me to effectively communicate much of the complexity and depth of nuance and gesture encoded within African American gospel expression to the choir. For example, the often heavily syncopated and dialectically idiomatic melodic and rhythmic phrases of African American gospel are not immediately or easily understood or realizable by the SGC singers. To enable the choir to understand, memorize and recreate these complex rhythmic lines, I will initially play the desired articulation on the piano, at one time emphasising the rhythmic feel by singing and expressing the fundamental pulse by stamping my feet loudly in time. The choir will then be asked to stamp their feet in time with the pulse (or clap their hands, or both) whilst singing the line back. In this way, I am endeavouring to connect the physical, aural and intellectual components of essential musical process so that the choir members are able to, over time, make a stronger and lasting connection with elements of African American musical expression that their own cultural and musical traditions often inhibit.

Additionally, I also regularly re-tell the historical and biographical stories of Africa America. I include explanations of the coded language and duality of meaning in traditional spirituals such as “Steal Away,” first-hand accounts of the lives of slaves like George, and even stories directly relayed through African Americans like Anthony Campbell and many others. By doing this, it is possible to establish a more directly informed emotional connection for the choir that dramatically effects the quality of their musical expression and ability to communicate with their audience.

However, as we have previously examined, many of the musical and physical techniques essential to authentic gospel are not achievable by the SGC, and much of the emotional and spiritual content of gospel that derives from a unique African American Pentecostal religious experience and expression is not transferable into the predominantly secular concert environment in which the SGC usually perform. For example, African American gospel arrangers and writers use a technique of inverting choral parts and using a generally higher tessitura to create greater musical, emotional and spiritual intensity that the SGC find difficult to emulate with the same degree of warmth and power (see also Appendix 6).²⁸⁹ Similarly, many of the musical and physical characteristics of gospel music – such as the lengthy repetition of the vamp chorus – outwardly express a state of emotional psycho-spiritual ecstasy typically experienced by worshippers within the African American Pentecostal tradition and this cannot be directly recreated within the SGC’s predominantly concert based, secular context.²⁹⁰ It becomes necessary therefore to rework the arrangement of each

²⁸⁹ The inversion of choral parts is simple technique that can add intensity to repeated verse, chorus or vamp sections. The tenor part moves to the alto above it, the alto to the soprano above that, and the soprano part moves to the tenor part, transposing it up one octave. See also Appendix 6.

²⁹⁰ The extended vamp chorus that typically concludes a gospel song functions within African American culture as an expression of religious ecstasy, where the numerous repetitions of melody, accompaniment and physical movement elicit a trance-like state in both performer and

song to make it more readily musically achievable and culturally relevant for the members of the SGC, and it this process that also makes a significant contribution to the unique musical style that the whole ensemble – including the band – have developed.

Final Summations and Conclusions

Whether a specific African American gospel element, technique, or concept is directly transferable into the Tasmanian context or not, my role in the transculturalisation process is both significant and defining. However, in my view, musical expression is not an endpoint in itself. I would contend that truly great music ultimately serves something higher, transcending the intellectual, aural, emotional and visceral in a genuinely spiritual expression that cannot be denied, avoided or ignored. It cannot remain in the background and demands to be heard, engaged with and emotionally felt, moving the listener to a level of experience that is more than simply musical and is about being truly human.

A recent Southern Gospel Choir performance at Hobart's Stanley Burbury theatre had progressed particularly well. In front of an audience in excess of 700 people, the

audience/congregation that as a result can be sustained for significant periods. The audience/congregation and performers do not grow tired of these repetitions, because they are simply an outward expression and generator of the increasing heightened musical and spiritual intensity being experienced by the community. Within the commercial and predominantly secular Tasmanian environment, the use of extended vamps makes little sense to either audience or performer as the underlying spirituality that sustains them in their original form has little or no context within which to connect, significantly limiting their effectiveness in performance. Tasmanian audiences become noticeably unsettled and disengaged. Therefore the author regularly shortens the length of the vamp chorus, responding emotionally and musically to his perception of the audience's receptivity and engagement in determining how far the vamp can be sustained. The interconnectedness with which the musical, physical, emotional and spiritual elements operate within African American gospel music – partly illustrated in the two preceding examples – is not only definitive of African American gospel music and culture, it cannot be manufactured or recreated outside of it.

choir's intonation and articulation had been accurate and clear; their phrasing and feel in the delivery of the melodic and rhythmic lines was unified and precise; they had successfully negotiated the key structural elements of each song, producing smooth transitions and finally, a musical and exciting performance overall. However, with the increase in intensity and emotional impact of the "Amen" canon of their final encore song – Richard Smallwood's *Total Praise* – the choir intuitively raised their hands upwards with a gesture similar to the physical expression of praise and religious ecstasy common within Pentecostal Christian denominations. The greater majority of the Southern Gospel Choir were not then – or now – practicing Pentecostal Christians. Many of the choir did not at that time ascribe to any particular religious belief, and yet remarkably they responded to this tangible increase in musical, emotional and spiritual intensity with a unified outward and physical sign of the inner emotional and "spiritual" intensity that they – and indeed their audience – were experiencing. The musical expression at this point of the Southern Gospel Choir had transcended its essential and well rehearsed intellectual, musical, emotional and physical constituents, becoming the genuinely and affecting "spiritual" experience to which all great music and musicians aspire. It is this transcendent musical spiritual expression that lies at the core of African American gospel music and the African American deeply embedded cultural trace.

The Southern Gospel Choir and their director are not African American. The defining characteristics of that culture may well resonate – even powerfully – for some, but they were not born of it or nurtured by it or the deeply embedded cultural trace that so powerfully defines that community and its sacred, gospel music. Furthermore, my musical expression and performance practices, and those of the SGC, are not, and

cannot be, authentically African American either. However, the inherent musicality, sincerity and passion that I, and they, exhibit in performance is undeniable, genuinely affecting and extremely emotionally powerful. It is my view that, with the Southern Gospel Choir, I have created a musical expression and performance style that dramatically and emotionally engages our audience in an experience and expression of community and broader spirituality not altogether common within the Australian musical context. Ultimately, I believe this has been achieved for the greater part through my ability to articulately and musically communicate my experiences and knowledge of African American gospel culture and tradition to the members of the Southern Gospel Choir and the audiences for whom we perform. I endeavour to create an environment where the choir are able to draw on both African American gospel performance practice and culture as well as their own unique, complex and ethnically diverse set of Australian and specifically Tasmanian socio-cultural traditions. It is my belief that, under my direction, the Southern Gospel Choir have indeed created their own musical and cultural authenticity, and through this unique musical expression of community and spirituality, together we have been able to grow the powerful resonance of African American gospel music into a trans-cultural Australian gospel music tradition that now resounds with a uniquely *Tasmanian* voice.

APPENDIX 1:

The Skip-shuffle

The skip-shuffle takes the standard straight-8 feel and sub-divides the eighth note into triplets. In Jazz “swing” for example, the quarter note is effectively subdivided into triplet eighth notes, so that two grouped eighth notes will sound with a triplet eighth note rest in between, effectively placing the second eighth note closer to the next note/rest in the sequence. The subdivision of the beat for the skip shuffle, however, is more complex, occurring on three levels: quarter notes (as written), eighth notes (as written) and sixteenth notes that subdivide each eighth note into triplet sixteenth notes (see Figure 113).

Figure 113: Skip-shuffle sub-division.

Figure 113 illustrates the skip-shuffle sub-division through four musical staves, all in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

- Staff 1:** Labeled "Swing feel written as . . .". It shows a sequence of quarter notes: F#4, C#5, G#5, F#4, C#5, G#4, F#3, C#3, G#2.
- Staff 2:** Labeled "Swing feel played as . . .". It shows the same sequence of notes as Staff 1, but each quarter note is subdivided into a triplet of eighth notes. The first triplet (F#4, C#5, G#5) is bracketed with a "3" above it. The subsequent eighth notes are grouped into triplets with "3" below each group.
- Staff 3:** Labeled "Skip-shuffle written as . . .". It shows the same sequence of quarter notes as Staff 1.
- Staff 4:** Labeled "Skip-shuffle played as . . .". It shows the same sequence of notes as Staff 3, but each quarter note is subdivided into a triplet of eighth notes, indicated by brackets and the number "3" below each group.

APPENDIX 2:

“Our God Is Able,” W. H. Brewster²⁹¹

Arr. Virginia Davis

VERSE

As pil-grims all, we here so - journ We of-ten know not which way to

turn; But there is one who knows the road, Who'll help us car - ry ev-ry load

CHORUS

Our God is a-ble He's a-ble, Yes, He's a-ble Dark clouds may ga-ther a-bove you so dark and

sa - ble He'll be your shel - ter in trou - ble, He knows what to

do I know He sure - ly is a - ble to car-ry you through

SPECIAL CHORUS

Our God is ab-le ab-le Oh yes, He's a - ble. Dark clouds may
A-ble a-ble Oh yes He's a-ble

²⁹¹ Boyer, “Contemporary Gospel Music,” 41.

27

ga - ther, a - bove you so dark and

may ga - ther, a - bove you so dark and

30

sa - ble He'll be your shel - ter in trou - ble He

sa - ble He'll be your your shel - ter in trou - ble

33

knows what to do I know He sure - ly is a - ble to car-ry you through.

Knows what to do. I know He sure - ly is a - ble to car-ry you through.

APPENDIX 3:

“Great Day! Great Day!” (Traditional)²⁹²

Traditional Spiritual

1.

Chorus

Great day! Great day, the right eous march-ing Great day! God's going to build up Zi-on's walls.

2.

Exhorter/leader

Fl. Char - riot rode on the moun - tain top,

S. A. God's gon to build up Zi - on's walls.

T. B.

7

Response

Fl. My God spoke and the char-iot did stop.

S. A. God's gon to build up Zi - on's walls!

T. B.

9

D.C.

Fl.

S. A. God's gon to build up Zi - on's walls!

T. B.

²⁹² Warren, *Ev'ry Time I Feel The Spirit*, 46.

APPENDIX 4:

“At The Table,” complete lyrics (Smallwood)

- Chorus 1 Come on in where the table is spread
 And the feast of the Lord is going on.
 Come on in where the table is spread
 And the feast of the Lord is going on.
- Chorus 2 Joy is here where the table is spread
 And the feast of the Lord is going on.
 Joy is here where the table is spread
 And the feast of the Lord is going on.
- Verse 1 If you're seeking healing for your body (it's over here)
 If you're seeking for the healing of your soul (it's over here)
 If you're seeking for a soul salvation (it's over here)
 If you want the Lord to make you whole (it's over here)
- Chorus 3 Love is here where the table is spread
 And the feast of the Lord is going on.
 Love is here where the table is spread
 And the feast of the Lord is going on.
- Verse 2 If you need more strength and power (it's over here)
 Relief for your burdens and your pain (it's over here)
 Seeking for some joy for your sorrow (it's over here)
 Feast and you will never be the same (it's over here)
- Chorus 4 Peace is here where the table is spread
 And the feast of the Lord is going on.
 Peace is here where the table is spread
 And the feast of the Lord is going on.
- Vamp 1 It's here right now, what you need is waiting at the table
- Vamp 2 At the table, at the table
- Vamp solo At the table, at the table, at the table – ah, O Lord
 It's at the table, oh joy is at the table,
 He's, he's at the table, I know He is
 He's at the table, Lord, He's at the table, He's at the table, Lord
 You see love is at the table, you see joy is at the table Lord
 Joy, joy is at the table – If you need healing, it's at the table
 Mercy, mercy at the table, at the table, at the table, it's here

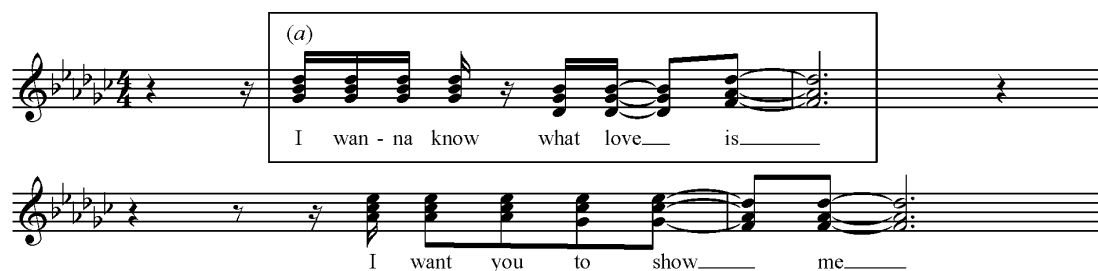
APPENDIX 5:

Gospel Choral Harmony

Integral to the gospel choir “sound,” and employed in the choral arrangements of both Foreigner’s “I Wanna Know What Love Is” and U2’s “I Still Haven’t Found What I’m Looking For,” is the use of what I term “gospel parallel vocal movement,” which largely replaces the more traditional concept of voice-leading. Figure 114 (i) highlights the rhythmic unison and parallel melodic direction across the vocal parts which “gospel parallel vocal movement” creates. This effectively locks each part to the other in an inter-dependent relationship which removes to a degree the sense of vocal independence that traditional voice-leading creates.

Figure 114: Gospel parallel vocal movement.

“I Want To Know What Love Is,” Mick Jones (Foreigner).



In the U2 song “I Still Haven’t Found What I’m Looking For,” the vocal parts performed by the Harlem Gospel also demonstrate how parallel gospel vocal writing creates a subtle but significant move away from traditional harmonic relationships. The parallel movement in the choir parts at Figure 115 (i) for example produce a

C# minor chord over the B tonic, where a more traditional harmonisation would probably suggest a movement to the IV chord, E major, over the B tonic (ii).

Figure 115: Gospel parallel vocal movement.

“I Still Haven’t Found what I’m Looking For,” Bono/U2.

(i) Harlem Gospel Choir vocal arrangement for "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For".

B C#mi/B B B C#mi/B B B C#mi/B B C#mi/B B7

I have climbed high - est mount, I have run through the fields

(ii) Traditional harmonic realisation for "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For".

B E/B B B E/B B B E/B B B F# B7

I have climbed high - est mount, I have run through the fields

As a result, traditional melodic resolutions – leading note to tonic, subdominant to mediant – are not always applicable or employed in gospel music. Together with the rhythmic unison singing which characterises the greater part of traditional gospel singing, gospel parallel vocal movement produces a sound that is immediately identifiable as “gospel.” Additionally, the U2 and Foreigner choral arrangements employ three and not four vocal parts. The use of three vocal parts only – soprano, alto and tenor – was favoured by James Cleveland in the early 1960s and has dominated gospel choral arranging

since that time. The traditional accompanying chord sequences employed in gospel music were relatively simple and repetitive, and as a result the bass parts, underpinning the simple harmonic changes, contained little essential harmonic function or indeed independent vocal interest for the bass singers themselves. The bass parts were usually, and somewhat overpoweringly, also carried by the bass guitar or Hammond organ pedals. Contemporary gospel composers have built on this tradition, capitalising on the inherent harmonic flexibilities of this arranging style to produce a more complex and colourful harmonic structure within their songs. In his contemporary gospel song “Celebrate,” Hezekiah Walker employs the following choral arrangement that, in conjunction with the Gb major key signature, initially suggests a predominantly Gb major harmony (Figure 116).

Figure 116: “Celebrate,” Hezekiah Walker.



However, Walker’s actual arrangement, underpinned by the piano and bass guitar, employs a more complex harmonic structure (see Figure 117). The predominantly Gb centred choir parts are first placed over a Cb fundamental and chord, alternating with an Abmin¹¹ chord. The choral parts therefore form the upper extensions of the Gb⁽²⁾/Cb poly-chord at Figure 117 (i) and then of the Ab^{mi1} chord at Figure 117 (ii). Whilst they “sound” as a Gb harmony when isolated, the superimposition of the

choral harmony over the underpinning altered harmony redefines their harmonic context in a manner reminiscent of the big band arranging style of Thad Jones.²⁹³

Figure 117: “Celebrate,” complex harmonic structure.

The musical score is for the song "Celebrate" and is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The score consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has two sections highlighted with boxes and labeled (i) and (ii). Section (i) contains the lyrics "Je - ho - va Ji - reh," and section (ii) contains the lyrics "my___ pro - vid - er". Above the vocal line, the chords G^b(2)/C^b and A^bmi¹¹ are indicated. The piano accompaniment features a bass line that sounds the fundamental of the chords, and a right hand that plays a complex harmonic structure with many notes, creating a dense texture.

The use of a bass part, sounding the chord’s fundamental, would therefore also remove much of the harmonic flexibility and element of “surprise” on which Walker’s jazz-inspired harmonies rely. This contemporary technique of “layered harmonic substitutions” is reliant on the traditional use of three part choral arranging, continues to employ gospel parallel vocal movement, and is now in common usage within most contemporary and Hip hop gospel styles.

²⁹³ Rayburn Wright, *Inside The Score* (New York: Kendor Music, 1982), 51.

APPENDIX 6:

Gospel Choral Part Inversion

The example provided below (Figure 118) is taken from the vamp chorus of “It Is Well” arranged by Dello Thedford and myself, where (i) indicates the original part allocation and (ii) the inverted parts. The higher tessitura for all parts creates a generally louder and brighter sound that takes on a more emphatic quality.

Figure 118: “It Is Well,” choral part inversion.

The figure displays two musical staves for the vocal parts of the song "It Is Well". The top staff, labeled (i), shows the original part allocation for Soprano, Alto, and Tenor. The bottom staff, labeled (ii), shows the inverted parts. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 12/8. The lyrics for all parts are: "Well, well, well, with_ my soul." The notation includes rests and melodic lines for each voice part.

(i)

Soprano: Well, well, well, with_ my soul.

Alto: Well, well, well, with_ my soul.

Tenor: Well, well, well, with_ my soul.

(ii)

Soprano: Well, well, well, with_ my soul.

Alto: Well, well, well, with_ my soul.

Tenor: Well, well, well, with_ my soul.

APPENDIX 7:

African American Gospel Extended Vocal Range

In many instances, the SGC find that the higher vocal range, especially for sopranos and tenors, is difficult to achieve, producing a generally thinner, less supported vocal timbre that ultimately has the opposite effect to the original intention of the composer. With the contemporary gospel song “Hold Out,” written by Joeworn Martin and performed by Hezekiah Walker’s choir, for example, it was not possible to use Walker’s inverted choral parts for the final chorus section (see Figure 119). Therefore my re-arrangement for the SGC ensured that the vocal parts fell within a lower tessitura, one that the SGC were able to produce more effectively (see Figure 120).

Figure 119: “Hold Out,” original choral parts.

The image displays the original choral parts for the song "Hold Out" in 4/4 time, featuring Soprano, Alto, and Tenor voices. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains the first two lines of the chorus, and the second system contains the final line. The lyrics are: "Don't give up, don't give in." and "Hold out 'till He comes." The Soprano and Alto parts are written in treble clef, while the Tenor part is in bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The original parts for Soprano and Tenor in the final line of the chorus are written at a higher pitch than the Alto part, which is more centered in the vocal range.

Soprano
Don't give up, don't give in.

Alto
Don't give up, don't give in.

Tenor
Don't give up, don't give in.

5
S.
Hold out 'till He comes.

A.
Hold out 'till He comes.

T.
Hold out 'till He comes.

Figure 120: “Hold Out,” SGC/Legg rearranged choral parts.

The musical score for "Hold Out" by SGC/Legg is presented in two systems. The first system features three vocal parts: Soprano, Alto, and Tenor. Each part has two measures of music. The lyrics for the first measure are "Don't give up" and for the second measure are "don't give in". The second system, starting at measure 5, also features three vocal parts: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), and Tenor (T.). Each part has two measures of music. The lyrics for the first measure are "Hold out" and for the second measure are "till He comes". The score is in 4/4 time and B-flat major.

The SGC however produce a very different sound texture, dynamic and level of intensity at this point in the song. Walker’s choir produce a noticeable and affecting lift in energy and intensity as a result of the higher tessitura of the vocal parts, and which the SGC are largely unable to produce or replicate, producing instead a warmer and gentler expressive quality.

APPENDIX 8:

Audio and Audio Visual Recordings, Track Lists and Explanatory Notes

The following annotated audio-visual recordings (Appendix 8.1, DVD-B), and audio-only recordings (Appendix 8.2, CD-B) chronologically record the development and evolution of the Southern Gospel Choir, my role as conductor, pianist and arranger, and my career and development as a contemporary pianist since 2003 (including selected performances with the Very Righteous Gospel Band, jazz/soul singer Maria Lurighi, and the jazz/funk ensemble, *iCon*).

APPENDIX 8.1

DVD-B

1. “It’s Raining.”
Southern Gospel Choir:
Live broadcast and recording for ABC radio, produced by Tim Cox,
David Chalmers and Andrew Legg, 2003.
Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
2. “Field Of Souls.”
Southern Gospel Choir:
Feature performance at annual “Energiser Concert,” combined with
the Energiser choir, Derwent entertainment Centre, Hobart, July 2004.
Piano, lead vocals and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
3. “Gospel Choir.”
ABC Television Stateline:
Airlie Ward, feature article on Andrew Legg and the Southern Gospel
Choir. June 18, 2004.
Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
4. “Tas Gospel Singer A Celebrity In US.”
ABC Television 7:30 Report:
Maxine McKew/Jocelyn Nettlefold, feature article on Andrew Legg,
including Horace Boyer and the Southern Gospel Choir. July 6, 2005.
Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
5. “Daily Bread/Lord of the Harvest.”
Southern Gospel Choir: Promotional DVD.
Soundtrack arranged, directed and produced by Andrew Legg, for
Lindsey Field, Sony/EMI and the *MYER Christmas Album*, 2006.
Recorded at Red Planet Studios and St John’s Anglican church,
New Town, Hobart.
Piano, Hammond organ, guitar and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
Video produced by Andrew Legg and Matt Charles for Legwarmer
Productions and for official choir web page,
Southernngospelchoir.com.au, and
myspace.com/southernngospelchoir.com. May, 2007.
6. “Baltimore” “ESP”
iCon:
Live un-mastered concert DVD, featuring Andrew Legg on Fender
Rhodes and piano. Concert at Conservatorium of Music, June 2007.
Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.

“

APPENDIX 8.1 (cont.)

DVD-B

7. ESP”
 iCon:
 Live un-mastered concert DVD, featuring Andrew Legg on Fender Rhodes and piano. Concert at Conservatorium of Music, June 2007.
 Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
8. “O Come All Ye Faithful.”
 Southern Gospel Choir:
 Recorded live for ABC “Collectors” Christmas edition, aired on December 23, 2007. Music arranged by Andrew Legg, recorded in the Hobart Town Hall on October 20, 2007.
 Piano, arrangement and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
9. “Field Of Souls.”
 Andrew Legg, Greater St. Marks Baptist Church Choir, Tuskegee:
 This amateur video footage captures some of the essential differences in vocal attack, vibrato and vocal tone produced by a traditional, community based African American gospel choir, providing a clear contrast in vocal colour and texture to the Southern Gospel Choir’s rendition of the same song (see Appendix 8.2 and CD-B Track 4).
 Recorded live at St. Marks, Tuskegee Alabama, December 15, 2007.
 Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
10. “Keep Singing.”
 Sermon by Dr. Clarence P. Nobel.
 1:20:00 demonstrates Nobel’s use of “rhythmic emphasis” and congregational/audience response.
 1:23:23 demonstrates Nobel’s reliance on the deeply embedded cultural trace, calling on traditional African American phrases and imagery – “He may not come when you want him, but He’s always right on time.” The vocal intensity of the spontaneous congregational response indicates not only their recognition of it, but their re-affirmation of its original historical and contextual meaning.
 1:29:30 “He brought me from a mighty long way.” Nobel demonstrates the close link between singer and preacher, by moving his form of address firstly into song-speech, and then finally into song.

APPENDIX 8.2

CD-B

1. “It’s Raining.”
Southern Gospel Choir.
Live recording and broadcast for ABC radio, Hobart, May 2003.
Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
2. “Caught Up.”
Southern Gospel Choir:
Live un-mastered concert recording, Conservatorium recital hall, July 2003.
Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
3. “He Loves Me.”
Southern Gospel Choir:
From the album *Great Day*. Additional arrangements by Andrew Legg.
Recorded live at the Conservatorium of Music, Hobart,
October/November, 2005.
Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
4. “Field Of Souls.”
Southern Gospel Choir:
From the album *Great Day*. Arrangements and additional guitar and
Hammond organ by Andrew Legg. Recorded live at the
Conservatorium of Music, Hobart, October/November, 2005.
Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
5. “Daily Bread/Lord of the Harvest.”
Southern Gospel Choir:
Additional Hammond organ and guitar by Andrew Legg. Arranged,
directed and produced by Andrew Legg, for Lindsey Field, Sony/EMI
and the *MYER Christmas Album*, 2006. Recorded at Red Planet
Studios and St John’s Anglican church, Newtown, Hobart, 2006.
Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
6. “Lush Life.”
Andrew Legg (piano) and Maria Lurighi (voice):
Studio demo recording, (mastered) May 2007.
Piano, arrangement and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
7. “Come Together.”
Andrew Legg (piano) and Maria Lurighi (voice):
Studio demo recording, (mastered) May 2007.
Piano, arrangement and musical direction – Andrew Legg.

APPENDIX 8.2 (cont.)

CD-B

8. "Blackout."
iCon:
Conservatorium resident jazz/funk ensemble, directed by Andrew Legg (piano and Fender Rhodes). Live un-mastered concert recording, Conservatorium recital hall, June 2007
Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
9. "Anthem Of Praise."
Southern Gospel Choir:
Live un-mastered concert recording, Hobart Town Hall, June 2007.
Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
10. "Jesus Paid It All."
Southern Gospel Choir:
Live un-mastered concert recording, Hobart Town Hall, June 2007.
Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
11. "Climbing Higher Mountains."
Southern Gospel Choir:
Live concert recording, Hobart Town Hall, June 2007.
Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
11. "Precious Lord/You've got A Friend."
Southern Gospel Choir:
Live concert recording, Hobart Town Hall, June 2007.
Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
12. "Jordan River."
Southern Gospel Choir & the Very Righteous Band:
Live un-mastered concert recording, November, 2007.
Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
13. "Celebrate."
Southern Gospel Choir & the Very Righteous Band:
Live un-mastered concert recording, November, 2007.
Piano and musical direction – Andrew Legg.
14. "Happy Day."
Southern Gospel Choir & the Very Righteous Band:
Live concert recording, November, 2007.
Piano, arrangement and musical direction – Andrew Legg.

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